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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) and the participant rural communities between 1988-1991. The CRRP, established in 1988, consists of a partnership among rural Colorado communities, Colorado State University, the University of Colorado, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Colorado communities with a population under 5,000 were eligible to apply. The aims were to provide important outside resources for community improvement, and to enable the partnership to gain insight about rural communities. The majority of funding was provided by a 3-year grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Over 800 townspeople and local officials from the communities formed leadership teams. Team members engaged in a year-long learning and action program for leadership development and community improvement. Local and regional workshops were held on the following topics: (1) community development processes; (2) team-building, group dynamics, and conflict resolution; (3) effective meetings; (4) methods for community self-study; (5) demographic trends; and (6) envisioning the future through goal-setting, action-planning, and evaluation. In addition, each community received technical support services provided by university faculty and students. A brief description of the 45 communities served by the project is provided, including a summary of community activities. This report contains tables that display community and county demographic and economic profiles and community services. A list of contact persons for each community is provided. (LP)

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Visions In Action

Colorado Community Cases

A report of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project.
A cooperative effort among Colorado State University, the University of Colorado and Colorado's Department of Local Affairs.

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Visions In Action:

Colorado Community Cases

A Report of the
Colorado Rural Revitalization Project

A cooperative effort among
Colorado State University,
the University of Colorado and
Colorado's Department of Local Affairs
with funding by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Project Director's Preface i

Community Visions 1

Visions in Action 2

Colorado Rural Revitalization Project
A Learning and Action Partnership for
Rural Community and Leadership Development 3
A Mutually Beneficial Relationship 4
Learning and Action 5

Meet the Communities 6
Rural Revitalization Project Communities (Map)
CRRP: Profiles of Counties and Places (Table)
CRRP Communities: Local Services and Facilities (Figure)

Local Story-Telling: Time for Reflection and Anticipation 11

At the Beginning 12

Collective Concerns 13

Notes on Leadership Teams 14

A Look Ahead 15
CRRP Project Community Stories:
Topical Index of Community Concerns, Activities and Outcomes

Community Stories
Community (Colorado County)
Akron (Washington) 19
Antonito (Conejos) 21
Ault (Weld) 23
Bennett (Adams) 25
Buena Vista (Chaffee) 27
Calhan (El Paso) 29

Table of Contents (Continued)

Cheyenne Wells (Cheyenne) 31
Collbran (Mesa) 33
Crawford (Delta) 35
Crook (Logan) 37
Crowley County 39
Custer County 41
Deer Trail (Arapahoe) 43
Dolores (Montezuma) 45
Dove Creek (Dolores) 47
Empire (Clear Creek) 49
Flagler (Kit Carson) 51
Fleming (Logan) 53
Florence (Fremont) 55
Fort Garland (Costilla) 57
Gardner (Huerfano) 59
Gilpin County 61
Holly (Prowers) 63
Holyoke (Phillips) 65
Idaho Springs (Clear Creek) 67
Kersey (Weld) 69
LaVeta (Huerfano) 71
Lincoln County 73
Morrison (Jefferson) 75
Nucla/Naturita (Montrose) 77
Oak Creek (Routt) 79
Olathe (Montrose) 81
Otis (Washington) 83
Paonia (Delta) 85
Peetz (Logan) 87
Rockvale (Fremont) 89
Saguache (Saguache) 90
San Luis (Costilla) 91
Silverton (San Juan) 93
Simla (Elbert) 95
Superior (Boulder) 97
Victor (Teller) 99
Walden (Jackson) 101
Wellington (Larimer) 103
Yuma County 105

For More Information 107

PROJECT DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

The Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) was established in 1988 to provide leadership and community development assistance. The Project is a unique partnership among selected rural Colorado communities, Colorado State University, the University of Colorado, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Since 1988, forty-five rural communities have participated, each were involved in a one-year process of learning and action aimed at community and leadership development.

It is rewarding to know that as the Project began disengaging from "Year I" communities in 1989 in order to give attention to more communities in two subsequent years, noteworthy community and leadership development activity continued in many places. This year we have involved all participants in a process of reflection and celebration. The *Visions in Action* report reflects more than three years of the CRRP experience and summarizes stories of the 45 participating communities.

Hundreds of people, agencies and institutions have contributed to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project. This publication is possible because of their efforts.

Visions in Action is dedicated to the strong "can do" community teams that are helping to implement their collective visions in rural Colorado. Their shared commitment, aspirations and energy have already yielded many local benefits. And, the efforts that many are making to continuously welcome and incorporate additional volunteers in local leadership pools holds great promise for the future of rural communities.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation deserves thanks. When William Kellogg sold his first box of cereal years ago, he also wanted to give something and began helping rural people improve the quality of their communities. Today, with grant support from the Foundation, Colorado Rural Revitalization Project partners are operationalizing his vision.

Special recognition is due to the faculty, staff and administrators from the three Colorado institutions who provided support for the Project. Among many others, some have been directly involved in coordinating and implementing the Project. An inter-institutional policy board and part-time paid core staff guided the Project. Their efforts were supplemented by more than two dozen volunteer employees from the three institutions who served as community site managers. Those who served the Project for at least one year in these capacities are shown below.

Let me close by saying "there's more to the story." Time and space have imposed limits on our coverage and activities are on-going in many places. Fortunately, good citizens from all 45 communities have agreed to serve as local sources of additional information; their names and addresses are listed later in this publication. An independent evaluation study is also being conducted as a part of the CRRP reflection and celebration process, and a summary report will be available soon. The evaluation focuses on local Project processes, institutional collaboration and lessons that have been learned as a result of the CRRP experience. If you would like a copy of the evaluation report, please call or write for cost information and estimated delivery date. You may order additional copies of *Visions in Action* by sending us the enclosed order form.

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community visions

Small communities in rural America are confronted with change and challenge; they contain problems and promise. Among the most complex problems are economic shifts which cause loss of jobs, and population decline which drains local leadership pools and places responsibility for community maintenance and vitality on fewer citizens. These trends emerged in the nation's farming, ranching and mining communities decades ago; they accelerated during the 1980's. Other small communities also have suffered, especially those dependent on a single business or industry. With some exceptions, similar trends have been felt in Colorado.

Yet there is promise. There are many people who believe that small communities provide a life-option worth preserving for present and future generations. Experiences in Colorado show that some people are willing to join forces, not only to sustain small town life, but to adapt and improve upon it. People are taking action together to achieve this vision.

Local imagination and initiative coupled with the support of concerned, informed outsiders have renewed hope in a number of Colorado towns. In some places an awakened sense of community, expanded leadership pools and new alliances within and outside the community are emerging. Residents are looking to the future, assessing community circumstances and options, reaching agreement on community goals and action plans, and tackling a host of tangible community improvement projects.

These communities' accomplishments have not come easy. They represent the costs of commitment, compromise and concerted effort of hundreds of individuals, groups and institutions. They also reflect a growing ability to manage development challenges and processes in ways that are open, informed and democratic, forward- thinking and in the interests of the community as a whole.

Yes, there have been times when progress has been slow, bumpy and mostly uphill. Yet many communities appear better prepared for the roads ahead, which are bound to present some curves. The internal foundations and external relationships they have built should help pave the way.

VISIONS IN ACTION . . .

. . . is a collection of the stories of 45 small Colorado communities and the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project, a unique inter-institutional partnership that offered "outsider" support for them. Central thrusts of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) are summarized first, and the communities served by the Project are described briefly. A map is included, as are tables that display community and county demographic/economic profiles and local services and facilities.

The communities' development experiences, accomplishments and future plans are highlighted in 45 separate stories. The stories were gathered during retrospective interviews with local citizens who had been associated with the CRRP and represent their summaries of the "local CRRP experience."

The stories are preceded by a few analytic comments and a topical index of community concerns, activities and outcomes.

The index is organized in a matrix which summarizes activities of all 45 communities and enables quick reference to topics of special interest. A list of citizens who have agreed to serve as local sources of additional information is also included.

OUR VISION FOR FLORENCE
We believe Florence is . . . .
"A healthy, progressive and caring town that celebrates the past, with adequate facilities and services to support well-planned growth, while maintaining rural life quality. A community where our people have a voice in leadership and are ready to meet the challenges of the future.

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A Learning and Action Partnership for Rural Community and Leadership Development

Sponsors

Colorado State University
University of Colorado
Colorado Department of Local Affairs
W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Funding

A three-year grant came from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1988-91). The three Colorado sponsoring institutions contributed personnel and other support. Local citizens and officials gave time and effort, and participating communities contributed a $500 cash match for local leadership team operations.

Working Partners

The partnership involved 45 selected communities and Colorado sponsoring institutions. Townspeople and local officials formed community leadership teams. Team members engaged in a year- long program of learning and action. The program was facilitated by university and state agency personnel; it was aimed at leadership development and community improvement.

Over 800 lay-citizens and officials from the 45 communities participated in local team activity. The partner institutions provided some follow-through assistance to communities after they completed their project year.

Community Support Personnel

A core staff of six professionals served part-time (two per sponsoring institution). Each community was assigned a local site manager; most were field staff of the sponsoring institutions and all volunteered their time. Other faculty, staff and students from the partner institutions provided specialized technical support.

Administration and Governance

The project was administered by Colorado State University and governed by a policy board of top officials from the three Colorado sponsoring institutions.

Project Contact

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CRRP Concepts and Aims

Project designers believe that community well-being depends largely on local initiative and informed community leadership, but that communities can benefit from some outside help.

Universities and state agencies have important resources that communities should be able to access. If state institutions were to become partners, they could build a resource network to support grassroots community development efforts.

The institutions would also gain from the experience. While working with communities, their staffs could gather insights to feed back to the universities and agencies. This input would help keep them responsive to rural needs, able to anticipate future challenges and become proactive in their programs and policies.

As it evolved, the project plan integrated these concepts through a **partnership program of learning and action**. The model couples leadership learning activity with local action aimed at community improvement.

It is a partnership model that promotes working relationships among universities, state agencies and communities, and community-level collaboration through local leadership team development and action. The University of Colorado, Colorado State University and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs created the partnership with support of the Kellogg Foundation.

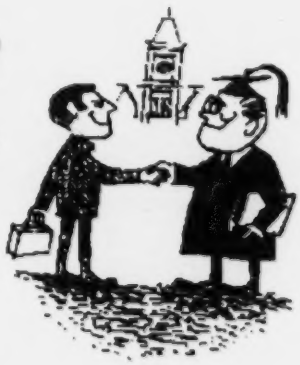
Selection of Communities

Colorado communities under 5,000 population were eligible to apply to the project. Applicants were asked to show need for assistance and to make several year-long commitments. Program policy required town councils to provide a resolution in support of the partnership and for communities to agree to form a local leadership team, participate in project training activities and work through a learning and action process that would result in some specific, locally-desired community improvements. In the second and third project years communities also provided a cash match to support local team operations.

A total of 45 communities were selected to participate in the CRRP. They are distributed throughout the state. Eighteen communities joined during the first project year (1988-'89), 17 in the second year (1989-'90) and 10 in the third year (1990-'91).

Community Teams

Each community was asked to form a local leadership team of 10-20 persons, including two town council members and a cross-section of local citizens (by age, gender, occupation, length of residence). CRRP staff offered advice during the team formation process, and provided workshops to help team members build good working relations. The project also granted each team $500 for its operational fund.



A Mutually Beneficial Relationship

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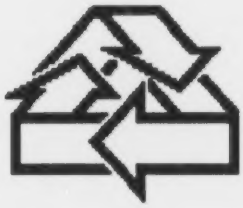
LEARNING  ACTION

The Learning and Action Model

The project provided educational, consultative and technical assistance services. These were organized in a year-long program of learning and action designed to help communities:

- form a volunteer leadership team;
- experiment with ways to work together effectively for community betterment;
- assess community circumstances and aspirations;
- develop locally-supported goals and an action-plan to guide local efforts;
- find and mobilize resources needed to carry-out the plan; and
- implement and evaluate as many as three community development projects.

Workshops on Community and Leadership Development

Community teams participated in several workshops during their year with the project. In some cases, workshops were offered locally. Other times, teams from several communities attended regional workshops.

The CRRP core curriculum included the following topics: community development processes; team-building, group dynamics and conflict resolution; effective meetings; methods for community self- study; demographic trends; envisioning the future, goal-setting, action-planning and evaluation.

Technical Assistance for Communities

The project provided specialized technical assistance, at community request. Each community was eligible to receive up to $2,000 in technical support services. The CRRP often relied on university faculty members and their students for these services. In the process, communities received expert help at reasonable cost, students acquired important work and learning experience, and professors gained awareness of circumstances in rural Colorado.

A wide variety of technical assistance requests were honored. More than one- half the communities received help in designing community surveys and analyzing local questionnaire data. Many communities received landscape, architectural or engineering concept design assistance (e.g., for local welcome signs, mainstreet facades, community centers, parks, bike paths, street drainage, highway relocation). Some other technical assistance examples include:

- grant-writing workshops;
- studies of rural tourism and small business potential;
- consultations on community-based trash recycling programs;
- a workshop that explored the feasibility and potential consequences of recruiting retired in-migrants as a local development strategy.

Meet The Communities

First Glance

Scattered throughout Colorado, the 45 CRRP communities represent 34 of the state's 63 counties (see map, facing page). Most communities are incorporated municipalities; in a few, area residents expanded traditional definitions of community to embrace neighboring towns and entire counties. Of the 45 communities:

- 37 are incorporated municipalities;
- 2 are unincorporated places (Fort Garland, Gardner);
- 1 represents 2 incorporated towns (Nucla/ Naturita);
- 5 represent whole counties (Crowley, Custer, Gilpin, Lincoln and Yuma)

Most communities in the east, west and south are many miles from urban centers. Thirty-seven communities are in non-metropolitan counties; eight are in metropolitan counties along the Front Range corridor (which runs north to south, separating the eastern plains from the mountainous west).

Community Profiles

Community/county demographic profiles appear on the next two pages. Summary data are displayed at the bottom of the table for:

- all CRRP communities pooled (includes the five county units);
- all CRRP municipalities pooled;
- all Colorado towns under 5,000 population
- plus Colorado and the U.S.

Most CRRP communities have fewer than 2,000 residents. 1990 Census counts show that the municipalities ranged from 148 to 2,990 persons, with an average size of 884. Some lost population during the 1980's while others remained stable or grew.

Twenty of the 45 CRRP communities lost more than 5.0% of their population while 11 gained more than 5.0%, 1980 to 1990. For very small communities such change can be quite significant.

Overall, the communities grew slightly. Population growth averages for the decade are as follows: 3.3% for CRRP communities, 4.0% for CRRP municipalities, 3.4% for all small Colorado towns. (The state grew by 14% and the U.S. by 9.8% during the decade.)

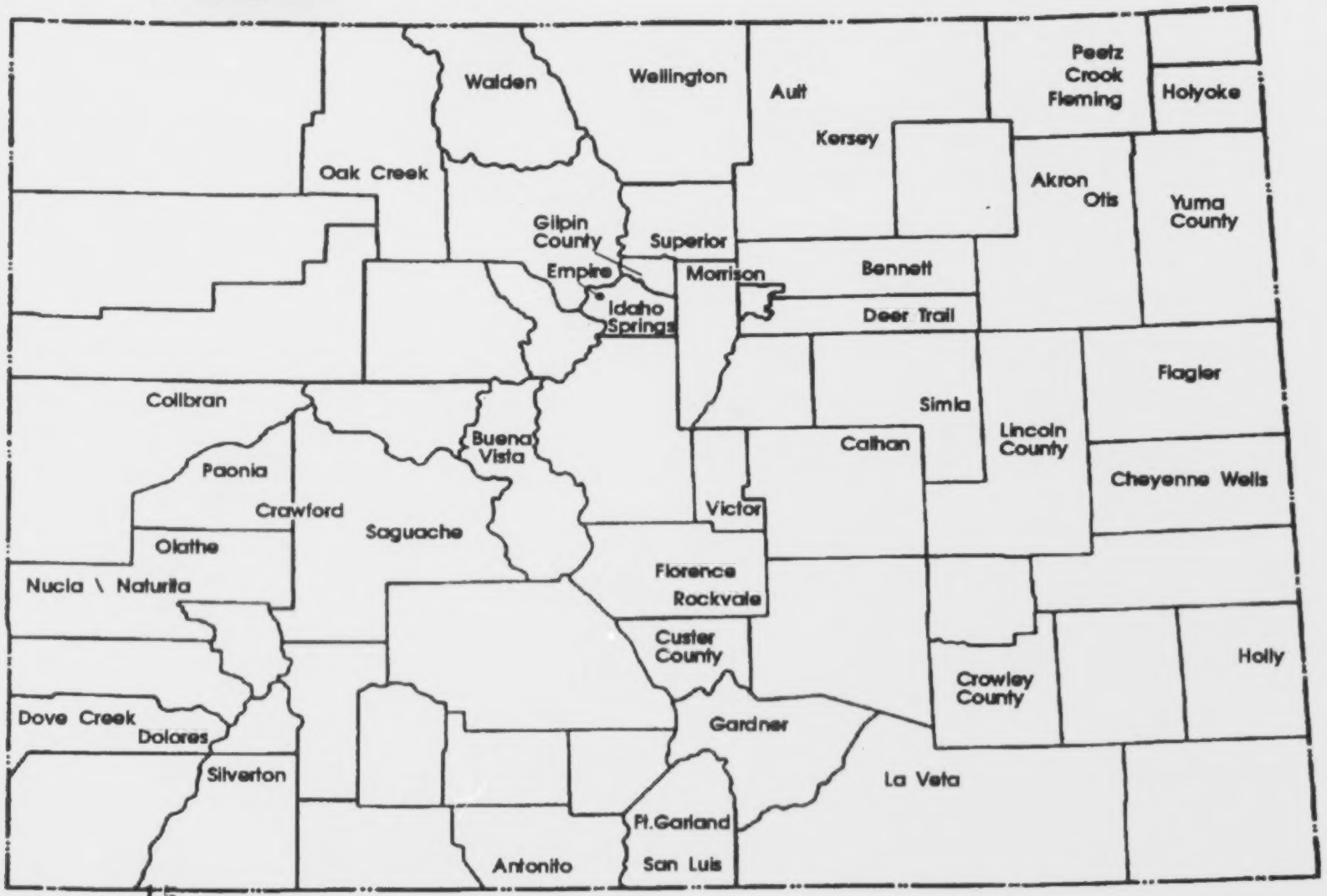
Rural areas often have relatively large proportions of senior citizens and many live alone. Similarily, most CRRP communities have greater proportions of elderly and smaller households than is the case for the state and nation. One deserves special comment: Morrison (in metropolitan Jefferson County) has a population of 465 with median age of 54.2 years and household size of 2.17; these figures are strongly influenced by its 175-resident nursing center.

The communities vary by type and economic base. Some are agricultural or mining towns and some, especially those located near mountain resorts and public lands, rely heavily on tourism. A few in metropolitan and adjacent counties are bedroom communities. Several are gearing up for major development (e.g., by gambling enterprises, federal/state prisons, airports).

The table displays 1989 per capita income estimates for counties in which CRRP communities are located. Income varies greatly by county. Several of the state's poorest counties are included yet, on average, CRRP communities' income is at par with the state's and nation's. (1990 Census income data will soon be available for towns and, in some cases, these are likely to be quite different from county-level figures.)

The table also shows the year in which communities were involved in the CRRP. A figure that displays selected public services and facilities follows the demographic table. It profiles CRRP communities according to the presence of schools, medical resources and senior citizen facilities. Additional profile data are included in community stories.

Rural Revitalization Project Communities



COLORADO RURAL REVITALIZATION PROJECT: PROFILES OF COUNTIES AND PLACES

County/ Place	Population 1990 #	Pop. Change 1980-90 %	Persons/ Hsehold 1990	Median Age 1990	Pre-school Population 1990 %0-4	School-age Population 1990 %5-17	Elderly Pop. 1990 %65+	Income Per Capita 1989 [1]	Leading Industries 1990 [2] 1st	2nd	3rd	Year In CRRP [3]
Adams	265,038	7.8						$14,306				
Bennett	1,757	86.5	3.02	29.0	9.9	27.1	6.3		Agric.			I
Arapahoe	391,511	33.5						$20,663				
Deer Trail	476	-2.0	2.42	35.2	5.9	22.9	16.6					II
Boulder	225,339	18.8						$20,203				
Superior	255	22.6	2.52	31.3	8.6	19.2	7.8					I
Chaffee	12,684	-4.1						$13,669				
Buena Vista	1,752	-15.6	2.39	37.3	5.6	21.7	16.3		Correct.	Tourism	Construct.	II
Cheyenne	2,397	11.3						$31,117				
Cheyenne Wells	1,128	18.7	2.48	31.0	9.1	20.7	15.2		Oil & Gas	Wholesale	Agric.	II
Clear Creek	7,619	4.3						$16,379				
Empire	401	-5.2	2.62	31.7	11.0	24.7	3.7		Mining			III
Idaho Springs	1,834	-11.7	2.41	34.6	6.9	22.1	10.0		Tourism	Manuf.	Mining	I
Conejos	7,453	-4.4						$8,157				
Antonito	875	-20.7	2.64	34.4	6.7	24.7	17.0		Manuf.			III
Costilla	3,190	3.9						$12,379				
Fort Garland	882	36.1	2.67	33.3	7.3	21.7	14.7					I
San Luis	800	-5.0	2.70	31.9	8.9	21.9	15.4		Mining			I
Crowley	3,946	32.1						$13,569				
Crowley County	3,946	32.1	2.50	34.2	5.6	15.4	14.6		Correct.	Agric.		I
Custer	1,926	26.0						$13,513				
Custer County	1,926	26.0	2.50	39.2	5.9	20.6	14.7		Tourism	Construct.		I
Delta	20,980	-1.2						$12,019				
Crawford	221	-17.5	2.13	45.9	3.2	19.5	25.3					II
Paonia	1,403	-1.5	2.39	39.6	6.6	19.3	26.2		Mining			I
Dolores	1,504	-9.3						$16,951				
Dove Creek	643	-22.2	2.55	34.6	7.8	22.6	13.5		Trucking	Oil & Gas		II
Elbert	9,646	40.8						$16,390				
Simla	481	-2.6	2.48	36.3	8.9	21.4	22.7		Retail			III
El Paso	397,014	28.3						$16,105				
Calhan	562	3.9	2.36	37.7	7.5	18.7	20.3		Construct.	Agric.		III
Fremont	32,273	12.5						$12,157				
Florence	2,990	0.1	2.46	40.5	3.9	21.1	23.2		Manuf.	Mining	Correct.	III
Rockvale	321	-5.0	2.34	39.7	6.5	15.9	19.3		Mining			II
Gilpin	3,070	25.8						$14,796				
Gilpin County	3,070	25.8	2.35	36.1	6.2	17.7	7.2		Tourism			I
Huerfano	6,009	-6.7						$10,977				
Gardner	575	-2.0	3.15	35.5	6.8	24.0	11.3					I
La Veta	726	18.8	2.39	39.9	5.9	19.4	22.7					II
Jackson	1,605	-13.8						$15,492				
Walden	890	-6.0	2.53	34.1	8.3	19.0	10.8		Agric.	Mining		I
Jefferson	438,430	17.9						$19,891				
Morrison	465	-2.7	2.17	54.2	3.0	9.0	41.7		Tourism	Construct.		II
Kit Carson	7,140	-6.0						$19,676				
Flagler	564	2.5	2.24	40.5	6.2	19.0	23.6		Food Prods.			II
Larimer	186,136	24.8						$15,925				
Wellington	1,340	10.3	2.89	29.0	9.6	27.3	7.4		Utilities	Agric.	Manuf.	I
Lincoln	4,529	-2.9						$18,487				
Lincoln County	4,529	-2.9	2.43	36.9	7.6	18.7	19.5		Tourism			I

Logan	17,567	-11.3						$14,415				
Crook	148	-16.4	2.55	37.8	9.5	16.2	17.6		Trucking			II
Fleming	344	-11.3	2.36	39.6	7.8	19.5	22.7		Wholesale			I
Peetz	179	-18.6	2.39	36.1	6.7	21.2	19.6		Wholesale			II
Mesa	93,145	14.2						$14,232				
Collbran	228	-33.7	2.28	41.8	4.4	19.3	20.2					II
Montezuma	18,672	13.1						$12,572				
Dolores	866	8.0	2.55	33.4	8.5	22.5	14.9		Lumber	Construct.		II
Montrose	24,423	0.3						$13,150				
Naturita	434	-47.0	2.41	39.8	6.9	17.5	17.5					II
Nucla	656	-36.1	2.39	37.1	6.3	22.6	15.1		Utilities	Mining		II
Olathe	1,263	0.1	2.62	36.0	6.8	21.8	21.3		Agric.	Manuf.	Wholesale	I
Phillips	4,189	-7.8						$17,629				
Holyoke	1,931	-7.7	2.32	37.6	6.9	19.1	20.6		Agric.	Wholesale	Manuf.	III
Prowers	13,347	2.1						$14,439				
Holly	877	-9.5	2.42	36.3	8.3	18.7	22.6		Wholesale	Agric.		II
Routt	14,088	5.1						$19,412				
Oak Creek	673	-27.6	2.24	36.6	8.0	18.3	12.9		Mining			I
Saguache	4,619	17.4						$11,614				
Saguache	584	-11.0	2.33	39.0	6.8	16.6	21.1		Agric.			III
San Juan	745	-10.6						$13,557				
Silverton	716	-9.8	2.60	33.4	6.3	23.6	6.6		Mining	Tourism		I
Teller	12,468	55.2						$14,003				
Victor	258	-2.6	2.24	37.5	5.8	21.7	12.8					III
Washington	4,812	-9.3						$19,768				
Akron	1,599	-6.8	2.25	40.2	6.7	17.1	25.1		Agric.	Retail		III
Otis	451	-15.5	2.28	38.8	5.3	20.6	21.7		Wholesale			III
Weld	131,821	6.8						$14,230				
Ault	1,107	4.8	2.52	33.4	8.9	21.0	17.3		Agric.	Food Prods.		II
Kersey	980	7.3	2.82	31.4	8.1	24.2	10.5		Agric.	Construct.	Wholesale	II
Yuma	8,954	-7.5						$19,698				
Yuma County	8,954	-7.5	2.54	35.8	6.6	22.3	16.8		Agric.	Wholesale	Retail	I
Comparative/Summary Data:												
All CRRP Communities [4]												
count	46											
sum	57,060											
mean	1,224	3.3	2.46	35.6	6.7		16.3	$17,575				
All CRRP Municipalities												
count	42											
sum	37,124											
mean	884	4.0	2.26	33.4	6.7		16.7					
All Colorado Towns <5,000												
count	220											
sum	221,065											
mean	1,005	3.4										
Colorado	3,294,394	14.0	2.51	32.5	7.7		10.0	$17,504				
U.S.	248,709,873	9.8	2.63	32.9	7.4		12.6	$17,592				

[1] Per capita income figures are for counties and represent U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates for 1989.

[2] Represent basic industries which bring dollars into the community by export of goods and services. Local schools, health facilities, and government are not included, nor is retail trade unless it reflects heavy concentration of trade with outsiders (e.g., tourism).

[3] CRRP Year I = 1988-89; Year II = 1989-90; Year III = 1990-91.

[4] "All CRRP Communities" include 5 entire counties and 2 unincorporated places.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (Population); U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (Per Capita Income); Colorado Division of Local Government (Leading Industries).

Table Prepared By: Colorado Division of Local Government, Fall 1991.

COLORADO RURAL REVITALIZATION PROJECT COMMUNITIES

LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Place	Public School		Senior Citizens			Centers		Medical			
Name	Number	Grades	Meeting Place	Programs	Housing	Recreation	Community	Personnel[1]	Clinic	Hospital	Nursing Home
Akron	2	K-12	•	•	•		•				
Antonito	1	K-12	•					P	•		
Ault	1	1-12	•	•	•			P, D	•		
Bennett	1	K-12	•	•	•		•	H			
Buena Vista	3	K-12	•	•	•		•	P,D,O	•		
Calhan	1	K-12	•	•	•			P			
Cheyenne Wells	1	K-12	•	•	•		•	P, N, E, A, M	•	•	•
Collbran	1	K-12						P	•		•
Crawford	1	K-8			•						
Crook			•	•		•	•				
Crowley County	1	K-12	•		•			P, PP, N	•		
Custer County	1	K-12	•	•	•	•	•	P	•		
Deer Trail	1	K-12	•	•	•	•	•	E, A			
Dolores	1	K-12	•	•	•		•	E, H	•		
Dove Creek	1	K-12	•	•	•	•	•		•		
Empire	1	K-2									
Flagler	1	K-12	•	•	•			P	•		
Fleming	1	K-12	•	•			•		•		
Florence	2	1-12	•	•	•		•	P	•		•
Fort Garland	1	K-12	•	•		•	•				
Gardner	1	K-8	•	•		•	•	P, E			
Gilpin County	1	K-12	•	•					•		
Holly	1	K-12	•		•			P	•		
Holyoke	1	K-12	•	•	•			P,N,D.A,E,H.O	•		
Idaho Springs	2	K-12	•	•	•	•		P	•		
Kersey	1	K-12	•		•		•	E			
La Veta	1	K-12	•	•	•			P, E	•		
Lincoln County	3	K-12	•	•	•	•	•	P, N	•	•	
Morrison	1	K-6	•	•				E			•
Nucla/Naturita	3	K-12	•	•			•	P, E	•		
Oak Creek	2	6-12	•	•	•		•		•		
Olathe	3	K-12	•	•	•		•				
Otis	2	K-12	•	•	•			E, A			
Paonia	3	K-12	•	•		•	•	P, A	•		•
Peetz	1	K-12		•		•	•				
Rockvale								A			
Saguache	1	K-12	•	•	•		•		•		
San Luis	1	K-12	•	•	•		•	P, NP	•		
Silverton	1	K-8		•		•		P, D, E			
Simla	1	K-12	•	•	•			H			•
Superior											
Victor						•	•	E, A			
Walden	1	K-12		•				P, A, E	•		
Wellington	2	K-9	•	•	•		•	E			
Yuma County	1	K-12	•	•	•		•	P	•	•	

[1] P-Physician, N-Nurse, D-Dentist, E-Emergency Medical, O-Optometrist, A-Ambulance, M-Mental Health, NP-Nurse Practioner, PP-Physician Practioner, H-Public Health Personnel Unspecified

Source: Colorado Rural Revitalization Project Local Community Contact Person(s), Fall 1991

Local Story-Telling: Time for Reflection and Anticipation

"Citizens were objective, frank and enthusiastic in their assessments."

Successful community development practice is an exercise in democracy: it is characterized by negotiation, collective vision, informed decision- making and action. It's a spirited and dynamic process. In times of rapid change community development needs new information, ideas and agreements. It demands concerted energy of citizens and the officials and development professionals who serve them.

Once engaged, people often become so caught up in community action projects that there is little time to contemplate progress, reassess circumstances and gain agreement on future directions. Yet to do less puts the community's present vitality and its future prospects at risk.

In this context, the CRRP communities deserve special praise. Their community teams are taking time to reflect and anticipate.

A series of local meetings were scheduled during Summer and Fall 1991. At that time, Year III communities were mid-year in their partnership with the project; Year II and Year I communities had been engaged two and three years earlier. Most teams met face-to-face with CRRP staff. (In the few cases where this was impossible, telephone interviews were conducted.)

During the meetings, community teams were encouraged to tell about the local CRRP experience, what has taken place since and what might be on the horizon. Citizens were objective, frank and enthusiastic in their assessments. Their stories have been condensed and verified. Each contains information on:

- how the community became involved in the CRRP;
- how the community leadership team was built and played out its locally-defined role;
- how the team gathered information and helped citizens gain agreement on local needs, aspirations and goals;
- what specific community improvements were tackled, and with what success;
- and what team representatives envision for the future.

At the Beginning

Local start-up. Communities learned about the CRRP through a combination of sources. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs, University of Colorado and Colorado State University and word-of-mouth were instrumental in diffusing the CRRP concept.

Usually the local town board initiated the partnership application, appointing two representatives to the local CRRP leadership team. (Some exceptions are unincorporated Fort Garland and Gardner, and CRRP communities that represent entire counties.) Later and for local reasons, ties between town boards and local leadership teams ranged from very strong to almost non-existent.

Team recruitment and training. To get CRRP started locally, town boards often appointed the initial team; a number publicized the effort, advertising for interested volunteers. It was common for teams to recruit additional volunteers later.

Generally, teams began with 10 to 20 volunteers, and most were satisfied with their mix. Representation varied from place to place, but outlying ranching and farming interests were sometimes under-represented, and only a few teams included school-aged youth. Most included experienced volunteers who were already active in civic affairs; some teams were successful in recruiting other long-time and newly-arrived residents.

After initial formation, the teams participated in CRRP community and leadership development workshops. The sessions were intended as a springboard for local-determined activity (see workshop outlines, above). For many teams, the sessions helped promote good communication, team cohesion, dialog about the community and experience with some grassroots development procedures.

Local assessment and goal setting. Information gathering was an early local activity. Teams were encouraged to study community circumstances and potentials by gathering facts and soliciting ideas and opinions. Data and information often were collected informally, but many communities also conducted formal household surveys, town meetings and special-topic discussion forums. About one-half of the communities called on CRRP technical assistance for help with local surveys.

The assessments yielded objective and subjective insights and helped provide direction for community improvement activity. When the public was invited to participate in the assessments, other things were usually accomplished as well: local communications were strengthened and the teams won trust, local legitimacy and offers of assistance.

Next, teams engaged in action planning. They were encouraged to discuss large goals and then to develop ideas for small community improvement projects that could be accomplished rather quickly.

In part, this strategy was encouraged because communities can stand to benefit from small, short-term projects in at least two ways: they are useful in their own right and, the working experience can help build the momentum required for more complex, longer-term projects.

Most teams had little difficulty creating lists of potential projects, but some had trouble gaining agreement on priorities. Often this was because there was limited feedback from the community. More time was required for local dialog and consensus-building.

Collective Concerns

The teams uncovered a host of local concerns and have mustered support for a wide variety of community improvement activities. Many projects have already been completed with technical assistance from CRRP; others are in progress or on local drawing boards. The index that precedes the stories shows topics that the teams have tackled. It reveals broad categories of collective concern.

Activity in support of basic community/ leadership development is mentioned in many of the stories (e.g., strengthening communication, cooperation and planning capacity).

There were frequent efforts to improve town image and to make towns more attractive to residents and visitors. Work to bolster local services and public infrastructure was undertaken in many places.

Special events and celebrations were instigated in a number of small towns. Some events were designed to entertain residents and build community spirit, some to attract visitors.

Desires for modest economic and population growth are apparent in most communities. Some have focused directly on economic and job development concerns. In a number of cases, this is being accomplished through development of tourism resources. Recreation options for local youth and adults are also being developed, sometimes simultaneously.

Examples of Action Projects

Here are a few specific projects:

Youth involvement in unique ways: Otis and Simla have organized school- community efforts in ecology/trash recycling; Florence High School instituted a seminar requiring youth to participate in civic activities.

Retired citizens were the target of some communities' efforts to recruit new residents (e.g., Buena Vista, Dove Creek). Medical personnel have been the recruitment target of several others (e.g., Flagler, Fleming, Walden).

Creative special events have been hosted in many places. A few include:

- "Oak Creek Radical Road Race";
- "Safe Street" and "Ho Ho Hotline" (Morrison);
- "School's Out/School's In" (Empire);
- "Spring Steam Festival" (Antonito);

Complex issues and impacts have captured the attention of several communities. Newly constructed corrections facilities have affected Crowley and Lincoln Counties. Victor and Gilpin County are experiencing rapid change due to limited stakes gambling.

An up-scale housing subdivision is being built next to Superior; Denver's new airport is being built near Bennett. While researching economic development options, Flagler's study of hazardous waste disposal stirred controversy. Highway projects have challenged Kersey and Idaho Springs. A disastrous tornado rallied Lincoln County.

Regional projects are underway in a number of places. San Luis is linked with the Costilla County Economic Development Council. Communities have joined forces to create hiking trails and recreation districts (e.g., Crawford, Paonia). Bennett helped create Prairie Sun Arts Council, a joint effort of five neighboring towns.

Notes on Leadership Teams

Team Roles and Identity

Wrestling with implementation of project initiatives is a natural part of the CRRP teams' leadership development process. As teams struggle to identify their function and identity they develop the local capacity to respond to present and future issues. The capacity-building process has taken many forms.

Many teams see themselves as creative, visionary forces in the community. But once community improvement ideas are generated there is always the question "who's responsible?" The answer has varied, often due to community size, availability of volunteers and other resources, sometimes because of the nature of the project.

Sometimes teams take full responsibility for action, sometimes they recruit other local groups and individuals to act, often they function in ways that share responsibility.

Team identity has been settled in some places and continues to evolve in others. Fearing accusations of vested interest, some teams staunchly maintain autonomy. In contrast, some teams are closely allied with town boards, supplementing local government capacity by serving as study or action groups.

Some promote community improvement through alliances with an economic development association or chamber of commerce. Others have developed a coordinating identity; they convene forums for community improvement planning and invite participation from service clubs, churches, schools, businesses and government. Others have chosen to focus on select types of community projects; of these, a few have evolved into arts councils, historic preservation or recreation-related groups.

Team Operations, Access to Resources

Most teams have chosen to operate quite informally. Some have revolving chairpersons or meeting facilitators. Some operate as committees-of-the-whole, others with subcommittees of many volunteers.

Most active teams usually have at least one person who functions in a supporting role, helping with committee coordination, publicity, correspondence and bookkeeping. This "staff" person might be a volunteer, a retired citizen, a representative of town/county government, or a local business professional.

Teams have tackled projects large and small. They seem most satisfied when they are able to envision a large endeavor, and then plan and implement it in small steps and short phases.

Coordinated human effort has been the biggest part of team success. Team members have worked hand-in-hand with other local people; through CRRP they have also accessed technical expertise from state agencies and universities.

Local projects also have required materials and money. For these, many teams sponsor fund-raising events or canvass local groups for donated materials. They have gotten help from town boards on a number of occasions. Some have written grant proposals to foundations and government agencies. Pride of accomplishment is greatest when local teams find outside resources through their own initiative.

Team Tenacity

The community stories were written in Fall 1991, more than three years after first-year CRRP communities were engaged. Activity is on-going in most of the 45 communities. As for the local leadership teams:

- in 23 places, teams continue to function with broadly-defined community improvement agendas;
- in 12 places, team functions have been absorbed by another local group or, team members have helped create new, specialized groups;
- of the other 10 places, team members from 4 are willing to regroup and have outlined local circumstances that would cause them to do so.

A Look Ahead

> ***"The spirit of neighborliness and community is alive and well in rural Colorado."***

The communities' stories are an attempt to capture some of their Visions in Action. They are small snapshots frozen in time but the spirited dynamics that helped create them live on. Many community improvement activities are in progress, and volunteers from each of the 45 communities have agreed to serve as sources of additional information. Their names and addresses are listed on page 107.

There is good reason to celebrate local progress and plans. Many community teams remain active, working in behalf of the community and welcoming newcomers to the local leadership pool. Others, inactive now, see potential for major community changes which could demand their veteran insights and leadership capacity sometime down the road; they stand ready to assist.

The communities' stories reveal a wealth of local concerns and hosts of creative project ideas tailored to address them. They tell of hundreds of community improvements, both tangible and intangible.

The stories are a study in small town contrasts and commonalities. They tell of local operating styles and alternate approaches to volunteer organization. They illustrate that the same basic processes, commonly applied in the CRRP, are beneficial in a variety of settings. They demonstrate that caring and initiative of local citizens are cornerstones of successful local development.

The stories are filled with insights from the communities' experiences. In the process of telling them, 45 local leadership teams have added something to the collective consciousness of their communities. By allowing the stories to be so openly shared, many others can now benefit.

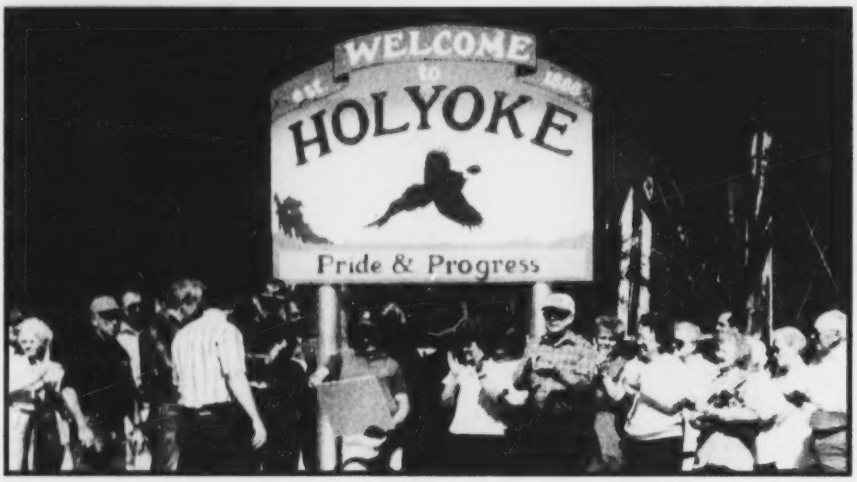
The spirit of neighborliness and community is alive and well in rural Colorado. Visions are being negotiated and acted on; small town life is being adapted and improved. With renewed vision, communities of the future are likely to differ from those of the past. There is much still to do, but the road ahead looks promising.

COLORADO RURAL REVITALIZATION PROJECT COMMUNITY STORIES:
TOPICAL INDEX OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS, ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES[1]

	Akron	Antonito	Ault	Bennett	Buena Vista	Calhan	Cheyenne Wells	Colibran	Crawford	Crook	Crowley County	Custer County	Deer Trail	Dolores	Dove Creek	Empire	Flagler	Fleming	Florence	Fort Garland	Gardner	Gilpin County	Holly	Holyoke	Idaho Springs	Kersey	La Veta	Lincoln County	Morrison	Nucla/Naturita	Oak Creek	Olathe	Otis	Paonia	Peetz	Rockvale	Saguache	San Luis	Silverton	Simla	Superior	Victor	Walden	Wellington	Yuma
BASIC COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT																																												
Local communication, tolerance, bridging local differences	•	•	•	•					•			•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•			•			•		•				•
Local civic participation, cooperation & coordination	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	•		•	•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•			•	•	•			•	•
Local pride, identity & "sense of community"		•		•		•	•			•			•	•				•	•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•		•				•					•		•	•	
External relations/resources, e.g.: knowledge of outside forces; access to grants, technical assistance		•		•	•				•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•		•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•
Capacity to explore, plan & manage the community's future, e.g.: community vision/goals; enlarged & enhanced local leadership; planning & zoning guides; land trusts; feasibility and assessment studies; local revenue enhancement	•					•	•			•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•		
BEAUTIFICATION & HOSPITALITY																																												
Town clean-up campaigns, streetscape designs, greenways, downtown building improvements	•	•	•	•	•		•		•				•	•	•				•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•					•		•		•			•	•	•	
Community promotion to attract new residents & visitors e.g.: welcome signs/centers; brochures, slides, videos; hospitality workshops	•				•	•	•	•	•							•		•	•					•			•	•	•					•	•	•		•			•	•		•

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES																																												
Community center		•				•				•	•	•																										•					•	
Ecology, e.g.: revegetation; trash recycling campaigns, facilities																															•				•		•		•				
Health, physician recruitment, housing, safety, schools, libraries	•	•		•			•			•			•		•		•	•	•	•	•					•		•	•		•		•				•		•		•	•		
Public infrastructure, e.g.: streets, drainage, curbs & sidewalks, water, sewer, landfills											•	•								•		•			•	•	•				•		•	•	•					•	•		•	
EVENTS, PROGRAMS & CELEBRATIONS																																											
Arts/drama, local history/culture				•			•													•								•									•				•			
Informational/educational forums				•	•		•		•		•	•					•	•			•			•	•	•			•														
Local celebrations & regional events, e.g.: picnics, fiestas, fairs, marathons, bike races	•	•		•			•						•	•		•			•		•			•		•			•			•	•	•	•			•		•			
JOBS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT																																											
Efforts to enchance/develop internal businesses, local industry		•	•						•				•			•	•	•			•	•			•		•		•			•									•		
Efforts to develop external businesses, industries	•		•				•	•		•			•				•	•				•			•		•												•				
RECREATION & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT																																											
Information, recreation & heritage centers		•			•					•		•				•		•																						•			
Natural areas preservation & development, e.g.: wetlands, fishing ponds, ski areas, hiking trails					•				•	•				•	•		•					•			•													•	•	•			
Parks, playgrounds, golf courses			•	•	•		•									•		•					•	•				•	•	•	•								•			
Marketing brochures & campaigns								•									•													•									•			
Recreation districts; recreation program development			•		•				•			•			•				•		•					•						•										

(1) Represents topics noted in the 45 community stories that follow. Stories were gathered during retrospective interviews with local citizens who had been associated with the CRRP and represent their summaries of the "local experience". Stories are brief and activities are on-going in many places. This index is not exhaustive. See list of community contacts for additional information.



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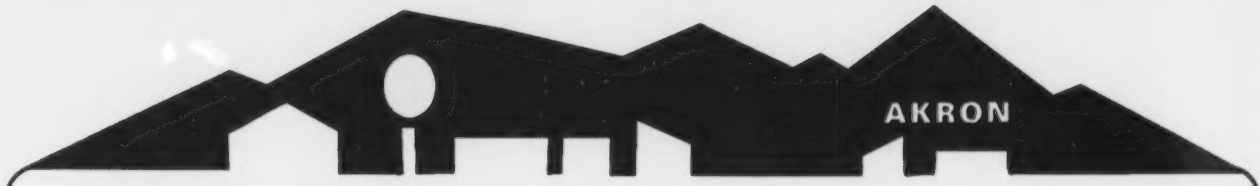


Getting the Word Out

Acting on a suggestion from their county's economic development staff, the mayor and town clerk of Akron applied for acceptance in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). At first, Akron and neighboring Otis discussed forming a joint team, but because of the distance between towns and their different needs, they each formed separate teams.

Committee members from Akron included farmers, ranchers, a banker, a former teacher, a minister, an electric co-op employee, and local business owners. Twelve people completed CRRP leadership development training at the Akron Senior Center. Groups from Holyoke and Otis also attended.

Akron	
1990 Population	1,599
Children, 0-4 Years	107
Youth, 5-17 Years	273
Seniors, 65+ Years	402
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-6.8%
Peak Census (Year)	1,890 (1960)
Year of Incorporation	1882
County	Washington
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$19,768

Who Are We?

The Akron group named itself the Washington County Revitalization Committee; it took time to develop a purpose and self-identity. At first, members who already belonged to other local organizations favored spending group energy on their organizations' projects. When the revitalization committee was in its formative stages, a lot of local attention and effort was directed toward improving the Akron airport and developing an airplane rehabilitation facility. Although the airport has been improved, those pursuing the rehabilitation facility discovered that the project was not feasible. An airport development group is looking into other options for the improved facility, such as hosting a large air show.

Members of the revitalization committee wanted to differentiate themselves from the airport and other special interest groups, but they did not want to be "just another group in town." They did not want to contribute to duplication of efforts and competition for resources and people's time.

Recognizing a need for improved communication and cooperation among existing organizations, and taking advantage of the fact that many committee members were involved in Elks, Lions, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations, the revitalization committee discovered a vital role it could play in Akron. The Washington County Revitalization Committee now is evolving into a "council of community organizations." Members want to conceptualize ideas for new projects, receive ideas from other organizations, support and coordinate efforts of other organizations, take on some projects themselves, and pass some on to other more appropriate groups.

Once members decided to act in this capacity, they contacted other organizations in town to gather input on community priorities. Based on information gathered, the group focused on several topics, including economic development, recreation, communication

improvement and education.

What Will We Do?

The initial goal of the Washington County Revitalization Committee was to attract people to Akron. Seizing an important opportunity--hosting a bicycle race--they discovered that they could successfully accomplish large projects. Group members then made it a goal to continue tackling large projects and events that would attract lots of people to their community, even when it meant taking risks.

Send in the Crowds

The most significant project the Washington County Revitalization Committee completed may have helped clarify the group's role. When the town of Frisco cancelled its plans to host a bicyle race sponsored by the Colorado Bicycle Racing Association, a revitalization committee member suggested that Akron might quickly organize to host the race.

Committee members are proud of the way they rapidly and efficiently mobilized the entire community and organized community groups to stage the race. In just six weeks, Akron was ready to host a bicycle race that brought 267 racers to town. Not only did this success build confidence in the committee, it also helped members determine direction and focus for their group. After this event, they chose to direct energy toward large events, and to serve as a community-organizing group.

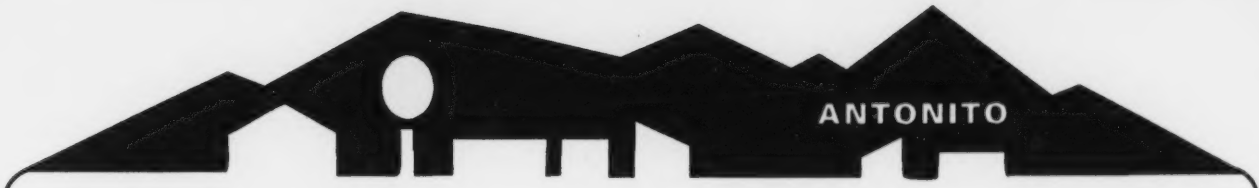
The revitalization committee plans to host the bike race annually, and to plan large projects surrounding Akron's airport. CRRP is providing design assistance to develop an industrial park located near the airport. The revitalization committee also will work with the Airport Development Committee to help sponsor a large air show.

True to its stated goals, the committee supports a state-sponsored rural education program, town signs, town clean-up and a crafts bazaar.

To Keep Moving

Washington County Revitalization Committee members want to encourage and help coordinate communitywide revitalization efforts. They also want to seek and capture new opportunities such as the bike race, and plan to put their energy behind large events that draw people to Akron.

"Members of the revitalization committee wanted to differentiate themselves...they did not want to be 'just another group in town.' They did not want to contribute to duplication of efforts and competition for people's time."



"In May of 1991, the first Antonito Spring Steam Festival drew a good turnout for a day of train rides, a pancake breakfast, an arts and crafts show, square dancing, a barbecue, a talent show, a chuckwagon supper, entertainment and fireworks."

Antonito	
1990 Population	875
Children, 0-4 Years	69
Youth, 5-17 Years	216
Seniors, 65+ Years	149
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-20.7%
Peak Census (Year)	1,255 (1950)
Year of Incorporation	1889
County	Conejos
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$8,157

All Aboard

After six months of public meetings to survey town interest, in October 1990, 35 people met and agreed to work with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) and form the Antonito Rural Revitalization Team. Approximately 20 people attended later meetings, with a half-dozen making up the active core. Support also came from Save the Children, an internationally known family assistance organization active in town. While originally convened at town government's request, the team functioned from the start as a separate entity.

Building Up Steam

The Antonito group saw several opportunities to tackle its goals and get the whole town involved in the process. Roughly 90 percent of the local population is of Hispanic origin and 10 percent of other ethnic backgrounds. The team was eager to welcome representation from all of the town's cultures and build consensus among ethnic groups. Their constant challenge has been to fully involve all sectors of the population. Fortunately, the town's citizens were willing to build a working relationship, and one early meeting at the Headstart Building involved some team-building activities.

Getting on Track

The Antonito Revitalization Team adopted one primary goal: to raise the economic level of Antonito by relying on the existing resource base to attract tourists and provide recreational activities. At one time, Antonito "...was a going town," as the town clerk put it, and drew visitors who viewed the town as the gateway to Colorado.

Hoping to restore that level of attraction, the group identified a threefold resource base: the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railway, unique town history, and distinctive local architectural landmarks. Townspeople also felt strongly that friendly Antonito people could be the best resource of all to attract steady numbers of visitors.

Full Steam Ahead

One major project the group wanted to tackle was the architectural unification of downtown storefronts. The idea was to keep to an Old West theme, by adding uniform signage; old-fashioned names for businesses (saloon, apothecary, general store); and decorative wood accents and trim to porches, posts, windows and building faces. Additionally, Old West lighting could be added along Main Street.

Committee members hoped from the start that all ages, cultural and economic sectors could be involved in revitalization efforts. With limited personal income, local residents must be very creative in looking for funding sources such as grants and matching funds. With Conejos County among the lowest-income Colorado counties, one of the most difficult challenges for the team has been collecting funds locally to meet matching requirements.

Early on, the committee decided to approach school officials about the possibility of having high-school students and townspeople fabricate the decorative wood treatments that downtown stores would need. The high school, however, has experienced cutbacks in industrial arts and business classes due to a recent enrollment drop. The school involvement part of the plan remains on hold.

Also, elderly residents could be asked to collect memorabilia from early settlers and railroad operations, and to compile their recollections and artifacts into a town museum. In late spring, a very active museum committee obtained property next to the railway for a future museum and CRRP arranged for museum design work.

One project that met with widespread participation was the town clean-up. Improving their town's physical appearance also boosted residents' morale, reawakening their sense of local pride.

With CRRP assistance, the committee has worked with a university landscape architect to draw up townscape concepts to present to townspeople interested in participating in the downtown facelift.

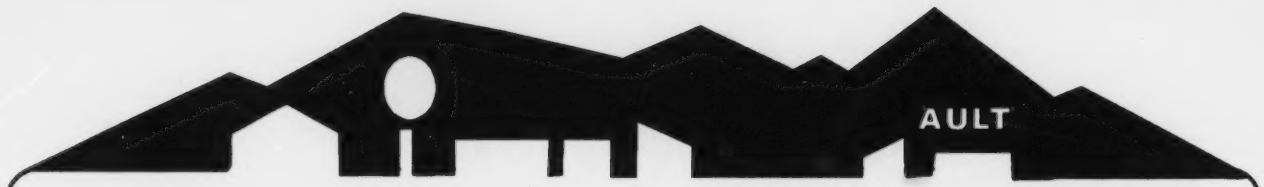
A related project called for the "greening" of downtown, which included building planters, window boxes and hanging baskets and planting trees. Vacant lots could be planted as small groves to further the effect. A planned line of trees could serve to direct and link pedestrian traffic through the area to historic attractions. An additional idea was to approach the railway to examine the possibility of relocating the depot closer to the center of downtown to achieve more town involvement in tourist experiences in Antonito.

In May of 1991, the first Antonito Spring Steam Festival drew a good turnout for a day of train rides, a pancake breakfast, an arts and crafts show, square dancing, a barbecue, a talent show, a chuckwagon supper, entertainment, and fireworks. Organizers estimate a crowd of 200 attended.

Down the Line

Downtown merchants and residents remain optimistic and enthusiastic about gradually improving their storefronts and homes, all working toward a unified town look. Committee members still want to develop a community center for recreational and cultural events. The committee continues to meet to discuss funding sources and gather community input.

The people of Antonito are optimistic about their future. They continue to work enthusiastically on their differences and preserve unity. They eagerly anticipate the day when travelers stop and visit Antonito rather than just pass through.



At the Start

Ault's town manager initiated involvement in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). The existing economic development committee, with the active participation of the town manager and town board, expanded to include broader community representation. The mayor appointed members to the CRRP community improvement committee, which never adopted an official title, upon the recommendation of those already involved in the economic development group. CRRP committee members recognized the need to address community divisions along several lines--political, age and socio-economic level. They sought to identify and include all special interest groups within the community. After participating in leadership training workshops conducted by Public Service Co., 10 to 15 people regularly attended monthly meetings.

Ault	
1990 Population	1,107
Children, 0-4 Years	99
Youth, 5-17 Years	233
Seniors, 65+ Years	191
% Pop. Change 1980-90	4.8%
Peak Census (Year)	1,107 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1904
County	Weld
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,230

Building a Team

Impetus for economic development resulted from a community survey conducted prior to the group's involvement with CRRP. Although results favored economic growth, group members realized that growth was not a settled issue. Members recognized two groups who took positions on the issue: retired people on fixed incomes who do not favor growth at the cost of increased taxation and who do not want their quiet surroundings disturbed by growth; and younger people who fear school closures because of declining school enrollment and who believe that growth can occur without changing Ault's rural atmosphere.

As the CRRP group planned for several economic development projects, the predominantly older electorate voiced their disapproval. At election time, most town board members and the manager were replaced. Since the former board and manager comprised the majority of the group working toward economic revitalization, the turnover left economic development efforts at a temporary standstill.

However, some people were determined to continue revitalization efforts, and did so under the auspices of service clubs, churches and other local organizations.

Taking Aim

The primary goal of the Ault CRRP group was to promote the need for local economic development and to get people from different backgrounds to work together toward the common goal of improving their community. The community had money to use for projects, so fund-raising would not forestall their efforts. With adequate finances, and survey results indicating support for economic

development, group members did not anticipate resistance to their project ideas.

Ideas for economic development all focused on what group members considered to be two large drawing cards: Ault's location near Pawnee National Grasslands, home to many bird populations; and its position at the intersection of two major highways.

The group prioritized six community projects that they thought would best utilize their present assets and yield some new ones: a grocery store and possible shopette, pocket park, entrance signs, community festival promotion, community brochure and town cleanup.

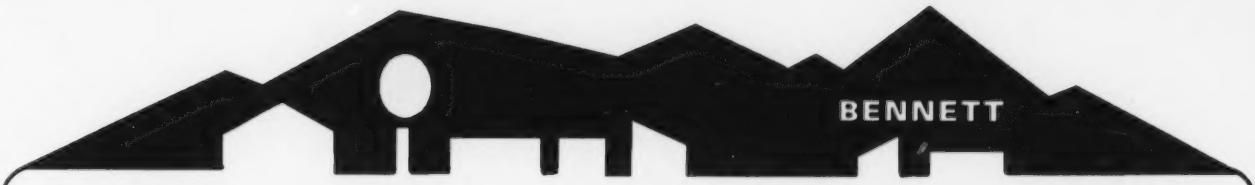
Priority: Action

The CRRP group was unable to complete its economic development projects, but members pursued other community improvements. Signs for the town entrances will result from some members' determination to carry through with their commitment. Four signs will be funded and installed, one each by local service organizations, local churches, the Ault Business Association, and the town and volunteer fire department. The lighted signs will highlight town events on the sides, and will be surrounded by xeriscaping.

In addition to signage, members of Ault's CRRP group have measured success by other events that occurred during the group's year of involvement in the community. More houses were built that year than at any time in Ault's recent history. Ault and other local communities formed the Highland Recreation District, which funded two VISTA positions for recreation. Also, townspeople installed lighting for a local ballfield.

For the Future

After signs are in place, members of Ault's revitalization group have no immediate further plans. However, they look to the future with some optimism. Declining school enrollment, combined with a drop in church membership, may once again raise economic development issues to the surface in Ault. When that happens, they feel that their CRRP experience will serve as a valuable foundation for future efforts.



BIC Begins

The mayor of Bennett initiated participation with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) by presenting the town board with a letter inviting application. Once accepted, the community began to learn about the project and to recruit a revitalization committee in the town. The Bennett Improvement Committee started with 12 people. Six people remain active in community improvement activities.

Bennett	
1990 Population	1,757
Children, 0-4 Years	174
Youth, 5-17 Years	477
Seniors, 65+ Years	110
% Pop. Change 1980-90	86.5%
Peak Census (Year)	1,757 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1930
County	Adams
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,306

BIC Spins Off Arts Council

The Bennett Improvement Committee (BIC) met each month as a full group, with monthly meetings of sub-committees organized around issues and projects. Although BIC members continue to meet, they have found it difficult to attract community participation in their group, and for awhile were afraid that lack of interest and burn-out of remaining members would cause the group to disintegrate.

Focusing on arts and cultural development has given the group a new sense of purpose. Working through a grant provided by the Colorado Council on the Arts and Humanities, BIC has provided leadership for organization of an arts council for the Interstate 70 corridor communities of Bennett, Strasburg, Byers, Watkins and Deer Trail. The group recently was chartered as the Prairie Sun Arts Council.

First Goal: Unity

Located just 29 miles from Denver, Bennett naturally tends to attract people who work in Denver but want to live in a rural setting. Fighting the "bedroom community syndrome," members of BIC hoped to help residents develop a greater sense of pride in Bennett. The group wanted residents to view Bennett as home, rather than just a place to sleep. To achieve this goal, BIC members realized they first had to address other problems in the community, so the community would possess more positive attributes in which people could take pride.

Bennett is comprised of three sections: the old town, the new town, and a mobile home area with a predominance of older residents. BIC made it a goal to get people from all three sections to communicate with one another and consider themselves as a part of one unified community.

BIC also recognized a need to improve the town's appearance to increase community pride. Further, BIC members realized they had to develop recreational, social and cultural opportunities to bring together local people.

BIC in Action

BIC first conducted a household survey

to determine local citizens' priorities about economic and community development. 93 percent of residents responded. Scoring high on respondents' lists of improvement priorities were better recreational activities and facilities, and town clean-up. In addition to providing valuable information for planning revitalization efforts, the survey results also have been helpful when applying for grants.

Following through with survey results, BIC sponsored a yard beautification contest, giving awards and publicity for the best-kept yards in the community. At Christmas, the group sponsored a Christmas lighting contest. In the spring, the group painted some low-income and elderly residents' homes during the Colorado Statewide Paint-a-Thon. The group also planted trees and flowers around the community.

With technical assistance provided through CRRP, BIC had plans drawn for re-designing two local parks, a park pavilion, and a walking trail system. The group gradually is implementing improvements in the parks, and the park pavilion was completed in the summer of 1991. The trail system will require more fund-raising before it can be implemented.

Exploring entertainment and cultural options for the community, the group sponsored a well-attended folk concert. With this momentum, BIC applied for and received a grant through the Colorado Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. The three-year grant is providing funds for the establishment of an arts council, arts education, and sponsorship of area events. BIC has developed this into an annual summer arts and concert series. The last concert of the 1991 series also was used to dedicate and celebrate the completion of the new park pavilion.

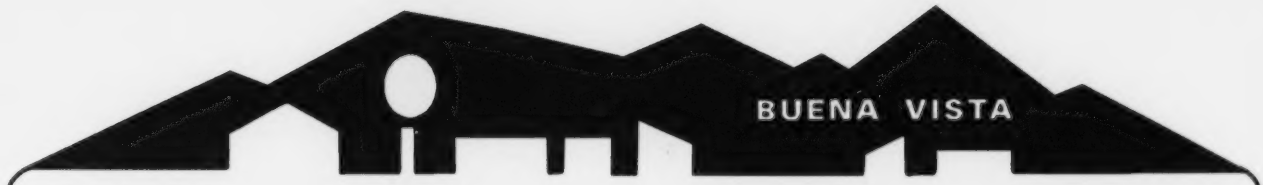
On the Agenda

BIC members will continue to raise funds for implementation of projects already underway around the community. Experiencing tremendous support with the arts and concert series, the group considers this direction to be their primary focus in the future.

Denver's new airport, which is being built 12 miles from Bennett, and cargo facilities for the Front Range/Gateway Airport project, just five miles away, undoubtedly will lead to some growth in the community. BIC members foresee a possible future need for their group to re-activate to help local government deal with planning and growth.

BIC members also are exploring an eventual Colorado State University Cooperative Extension link to provide small business or home-based business educational programs in the area.

"Fighting the 'bedroom community syndrome,' members of BIC hoped to help residents develop a greater sense of pride in Bennett. The group wanted residents to view Bennett as home, rather than just a place to sleep."



"CRRP provided a forum through which to get community members involved and fired up and then sent them out to get things accomplished."

Buena Vista	
1990 Population	1,752
Children, 0-4 Years	98
Youth, 5-17 Years	381
Seniors, 65+ Years	286
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-15.6%
Peak Census (Year)	2,141 (1880)
Year of Incorporation	1879
County	Chaffee
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,669

Road to Recovery

Attempting to recover economically from a mine closure in the mid-1980s, people in Buena Vista already had begun revitalization efforts when the town administrator applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project. Several groups already were proceeding with ideas for community revitalization projects. CRRP provided needed technical assistance and the opportunity to bring a group together to organize those efforts. Thirty people first became active on the revitalization committee.

Providing a Forum

The Buena Vista Revitalization Committee developed into a working group of the town government. Because the committee combined experienced leaders from existing groups in the community, members did not feel the need to participate in leadership training. They began CRRP involvement by using technical assistance provided through the project.

Sub-committees organized for each project, taking action in the committees rather than engaging the whole group. The umbrella revitalization committee continued to function for 1 1/2 years, passing proposals and funding through the town administrator and supporting legislative actions taken by the town board. The main committee then disbanded, but project sub-committees continue to work. The town administrator believes that "CRRP provided a forum through which to get community members involved and fired up and then sent them out to get things accomplished."

Focus on Action

The revitalization committee primarily worked toward economic enhancement of Buena Vista. Areas identified for action included town clean-up and beautification and attracting tourists. Because the committee combined groups with plans already developed, project completion became the focus of its efforts.

Action Everywhere

The committee first completed the Buena Vista Downtown Development Plan. CRRP's technical assistance helped with streetscape designs and signage plans. A $100,000 Colorado Energy Impact Grant

provided funding to implement this plan. Through careful planning and management, the committee put together a $250,000 project with just $115,000. Using local maintenance and services resources, the town served as its own general contractor. Only concrete work was contracted out. Local people donated services to install new wiring for downtown lighting provided by the electric company, and the town's tree board planted trees.

While the downtown development project was underway, CRRP helped the committee conduct a community survey to determine other issues and projects important to the community. Survey results brought to life an issue that previously surfaced and died out in Buena Vista--developing a recreation center and establishing a recreation district for funding. The town administrator sees the recreation center as an important project for a group other than town government to take on, so that people don't perceive it as just another taxation issue. The committee formed to pursue this project attracted participation of a cross-section of the community, even people not previously involved. The school district supports the project, and will donate 10 acres of land and partially fund the facility. People working on this project gathered information and visited recreation centers throughout the state.

The revitalization committee also launched a five-year project to develop a recreation park along the Arkansas River, just east of Buena Vista. Progress on the 95-acre park now includes a rafting access area, fishing bridge, fishing access trails, interpretive signage, boat house and walking trails. The park eventually will include an amphitheatre, information kiosk, picnic shelters, nature center with under-river viewing sites, riverside walk, RV/trailer parking area and softball/baseball field.

The park project received grants from a local trail enthusiast in memory of his wife, the State Division of Wildlife Fishing is Fun program, the Land and Conservation Fund, and the Council of Governments. The project also received a boost from the U.S. Army. The 52nd Engineer Battalion from Fort Carson continues to provide engineering and construction services through the Community Adoption Program. Project eligibility requirements include releases from local contractors, and project duties consistent with regular training maneuvers. National Parks Magazine provided national coverage for the project when it chose the river park as the Colorado project it wanted to feature in its annual edition.

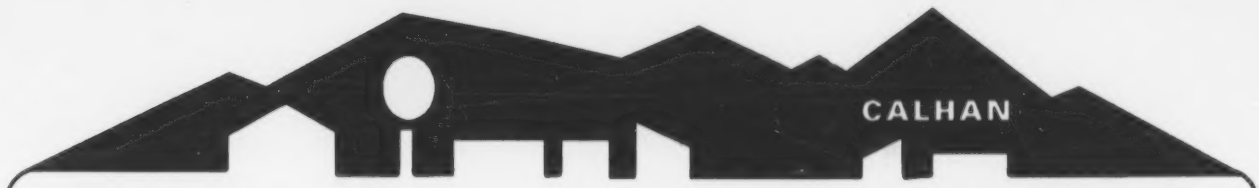
In addition to larger projects, the revitalization committee sponsored three workshops in the community that addressed marketing, hospitality training, and potential for recruiting early-retired tourists and new residents.

Along the Way

Although the revitalization committee no longer functions officially, revitalization efforts in Buena Vista continue through committees organized around projects. Project funds and budgets are administered by the town. The town administrator feels this is the best way to accomplish projects in Buena Vista, and that future revitalization projects will continue in this manner.

In addition to projects now in progress, citizens involved with revitalization efforts in Buena Vista also look for ways to address a housing shortage in the area.

"The [park] project also received a boost from the U.S. Army. The 52nd Engineer Battalion from Fort Carson continues to provide engineering and construction services through the community adoption Program."



Warming Up

The Calhan Town Manager first applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Initially, 18 people participated in the Calhan Area Revitalization Project (CARP); now the group consists of eight core members. CARP representation includes students, town board members, professionals, senior citizens, business owners, a rancher, a school counselor, service organization members and a member of the fire board.

Calhan	
1990 Population	562
Children, 0-4 Years	42
Youth, 5-17 Years	105
Seniors, 65+ Years	114
% Pop. Change 1980-90	3.9%
Peak Census (Year)	562 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1919
County	El Paso
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$16,105

Getting Organized

Although Calhan town government was instrumental in organizing a group to be involved with CRRP, group members asserted their desire early on to be independent of town government and other institutions that traditionally oversee community functions. The group wanted to develop its own vision for the community, representative of community attitudes, but not heavily influenced by other groups. Members viewed CRRP involvement as an opportunity to develop leadership within the citizenry of Calhan.

The full group meets monthly and subcommittees, organized to investigate and undertake projects, meet as needed. CARP members feel they have been successful at pulling Calhan people together. In the past, similar efforts failed because of citizens' lack of time and commitment. This may be because many Calhan residents commute to work in Colorado Springs, approximately 40 miles away.

Mapping a Journey

Viewing itself as a "bedroom community", Calhan suffers from a lack of identity. Recognizing this factor, CARP members set an overall goal to lead the community toward making Calhan stand out as a community that cares and has a unique identity. They also seek to develop leadership within their group to fight apathy and foster an interest in improving the community. These goals are reflected in the team's mission--"To encourage the citizens of Calhan to be interested enough to work together on common goals to enhance the quality of life of our community."

Welcome to Calhan

CARP started by conducting a town survey. Although their rate of return was not outstanding, CARP members felt it was a good representation of community opinions, and based decisions for further action on survey results. Accordingly, they set their sights on three major projects: building a community center, designing and funding town signs, and developing a roadside park. The elaborate stone, wood and brick signs would welcome

travelers at each town entrance and display community-event billboards.

Beginning with the project most easily accomplished, CARP members chose to work on town signs. To reflect the caring attitude they have for their community and the attitude they want others to adopt, team members wanted to take time to learn about signage and design high-quality, attractive signs. Group members attended a sign seminar sponsored by the El Paso County Planning Department, where they learned all about effective signs' characteristics, such as proper lettering sizes based on passing motorists' different speeds. With CRRP technical assistance provided by a graduate student, the CARP committee now has a design drawn, a location chosen, and materials and labor donated to put up the first sign. Pending State Highway Department approval, CARP members are ready to construct a sign welcoming people to Calhan.

Group members plan to build a sign for one town entrance, and later to add another across town. They feel they will achieve much-needed visibility for their efforts. Although many community residents know about the group and its purpose, interest has dropped off because people have not seen tangible results. With the sign, members of the group hope not only to make their community more attractive to tourists, but to make their group more attractive to community residents.

Next, the group plans to implement plans for a roadside park. The same student who designed the town sign has drawn park plans.

Their largest project aspiration will be to determine the feasibility of building a community center. The group plans to observe nearby Simla, which is pursuing the same goal, to learn from that community's process.

Moving Right Along

CARP's members face a challenge. Their CRRP site manager is moving to another state, which will mean a loss in leadership and resources for the group. Waning interest among group members, perhaps feeling that projects have moved too slowly, may make it difficult to continue beyond their community sign project.

But committee members feel strongly that the community needs them. Calhan most likely will experience slow growth, as Colorado Springs edges toward town. CARP members hope they can hold together, accomplish projects that will attract more people to their group, and help Calhan grow while strengthening its own identity.

"...listening to people who oppose our projects makes for balance in our efforts and also helps us question the feasibility of projects."

Cheyenne Wells	
1990 Population	1,128
Children, 0-4 Years	103
Youth, 5-17 Years	234
Seniors, 65+ Years	171
% Pop. Change 1980-90	18.7%
Peak Census (Year)	1,154 (1950)
Year of Incorporation	1890
County	Cheyenne
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$31,117

The Core Committee

The Cheyenne Wells Improvement Committee (CWIC) already was active before the city council applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). But town officials wanted to pursue the technical assistance and training CRRP offered. The committee started with 11 members, representing a broad cross-section of the community. Membership remains fairly stable; eight people comprise an active committee core.

Building Momentum

City council members and the mayor have been involved with CWIC, but the group operates independently of local government. The group communicates informally with city council and with other groups in town. The full committee meets monthly. Some informal subcommittees work on individual projects.

As the group's list of accomplishments grows, members feel enthusiasm for their efforts within the community also grows. Citizens have contacted members for information about how they can get involved, and with ideas for additional community projects. Visibility in the community comes from several sources. Most projects have been of a physical improvement nature, resulting in immediate visibility. The local newspaper provided good coverage of the group's events and projects, and a radio station in Lamar, 70 miles south of Cheyenne Wells, also provided coverage.

For the most part, the community supports the committee's efforts, and committee members feel this support helped them accomplish projects early, then kept momentum going with more projects. Group members feel it is important to acknowledge opposition and try to include opponents' participation. According to one member, "...listening to people who oppose our projects makes for balance in our efforts and also helps us question the feasibility of projects."

The group also credits its success to having a chairperson who is organized, energetic and devoted to the committee. Although she is officially retired, committee work and projects keep her busy full-time.

Charting a Course

CWIC operates under the broad goal of making their town more attractive--for people

living there and to people from outside the community. They strive to improve their town, so that they can attract tourists and businesses. Town beautification and clean-up became the primary focus, because the group realizes that a nicer looking town attracts people.

Working Together

CWIC members consider their greatest accomplishment to be the change in people's attitude toward their town. One member said, "Our organization has done many things here, but the most significant and long-lasting effect we have had on the community is that we made people aware of the appearance of the town."

Although beautification has been the main focus of the committee's efforts, they also delved into other improvements. They started a neighborhood watch program in cooperation with the sheriff's office, developed an arts council, assisted with Discover Cheyenne Wells Days, sponsored a leg of the Great American Antique Car Race, developed a county profile to match the community with possible industries, sponsored a cottage industry seminar and conducted a community survey.

Evidence of the committee's beautification and clean-up abounds throughout town. Through a town clean-up program, "Block Heads" and "Street Gangs" volunteer to keep their neighborhoods clean by picking up trash and encouraging residents to clean and beautify their lots. Through this program, "Yard-of-the-Month" awards are given for the best-kept yards in town. The group also purchased new trash receptacles and located them around the downtown area and on main street. CWIC also cleaned up and improved the town's roadside park. Expanding their efforts beyond town borders, the group adopted a stretch of highway to keep trash-free.

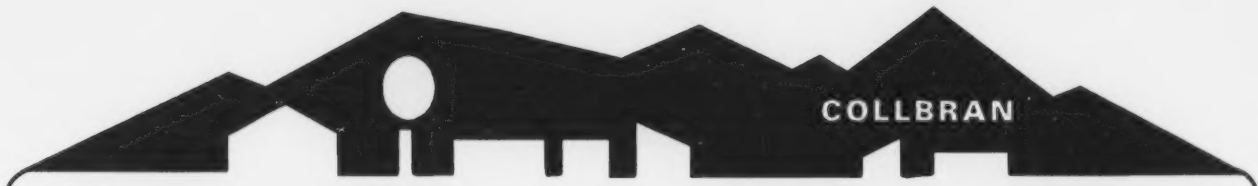
Town beautification projects included new street signs, town entrance signs, landscaping for the county courthouse, decorating plaza areas on each end of the courthouse, painting fire hydrants throughout the town, outlining main street building tops with lights, assisting with new sidewalks on main street and obtaining grants for trees.

CWIC members pride themselves on their ability to achieve major accomplishments with very little money. In addition to technical assistance provided through CRRP, the town and county also donated money to specific projects. Thus far, most of CWIC's accomplishments relied solely on donated materials and labor.

Looking Ahead

The Cheyenne Wells Improvement Committee believes that as long as there are projects to be done, members will remain committed and active. They hope to attract new people to the committee and take on larger projects. Plans include improving housing and a local park, and creating more jobs and local recreation options.

"Although beautification has been the main focus of the committee's efforts, they also...started a neighborhood watch program in cooperation with the sheriff's office, developed an arts council...and conducted a community survey."



"An early survey showed strong citizen satisfaction with local conditions. Committee members now say that the area's good fortune presented a challenge. As one member stated, 'Our area is so nice, we don't have problems that pull people together.' "

Collbran	
1990 Population	228
Children, 0-4 Years	10
Youth, 5-17 Years	44
Seniors, 65+ Years	46
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-33.7%
Peak Census (Year)	344 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1908
County	Mesa
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,232

Signing On

The Collbran town manager, with his extensive background in planning and zoning, encouraged the town board to apply for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Once Collbran was accepted in the project, the town board and the town manager invited participation from the unincorporated towns of Molina and Mesa. The three neighboring towns share one school system in Plateau Valley--the valley that lies between Battlement Mesa and Grand Mesa, on Colorado's Western Slope.

Pulling Together

To encourage participation in the Plateau Valley Revitalization Committee, information about CRRP was distributed in a number of ways. A valley newsletter carried articles about the project and invited participation. Volunteers also mailed post cards and CRRP brochures to every post office boxholder in the valley. Initially, the group drew approximately 20 responses from people from all three communities. Participation included representatives from local businesses, ranchers and farmers, realtors, nursing home staff, the U.S. Forest Service, the school district, the Job Corps training unit and the waste management district.

Over time, a core group of six people remained dedicated to community improvement. An early survey showed strong citizen satisfaction with local conditions. Committee members now say that the area's good fortune presented a challenge. As one member stated, "Our area is so nice, we don't have problems that pull people together." As a result, the committee had difficulty determining a direction and establishing goals.

A Team Takes Aim

In spite of residents' general state of contentment, the Plateau Valley Revitalization Committee recognized local residents' desire to attract more people and jobs to the area. Members established an overall goal of marketing the valley's attractiveness to tourists, businesses and new residents. The committee decided to develop a promotional brochure.

Working Together

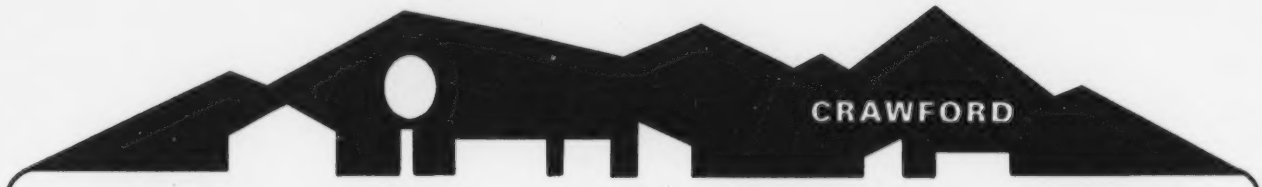
The committee began by conducting a household survey of Plateau Valley residents. CRRP assisted, and using door-to-door delivery and same-day pick-up, the return rate was very high. Survey results showed residents to be well-pleased with most aspects of life in the valley. Survey results have provided useful guidance for local government and the planning commission.

Based on the survey, and in keeping with their goal of drawing new people to the area, the Plateau Valley brochure developed by the group presents a colorful and appealing description of the valley's recreational opportunities, services, real estate options, business relocation incentives and workforce information.

Funded by the Plateau Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Collbran and technical assistance from CRRP, the brochure is distributed at businesses and interstate highway rest stops, and mailed out in response to real estate and business relocation inquiries.

Tomorrow and Beyond

The Plateau Valley Revitalization Committee finished meeting in the summer of 1991 when the brochure was published. Members say they will come together again when the area faces a pressing issue and prompts people to draw on their CRRP training.



Waking the Association

When Crawford's town administrator applied to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP), the Crawford Area Betterment Association existed but was inactive. The town administrator recognized an opportunity to bring revitalization efforts back to life in Crawford with assistance through CRRP. Eighteen people from the community attended leadership training workshops, and 20 to 25 people met throughout the project year. Ten to 15 people continue to meet with others from the community who are involved in projects.

Finding Direction

To establish direction for local revitalization efforts, members first used CRRP assistance to conduct a community survey. The group hosted a community meeting to report survey results. The meeting served to inform the community of the group's purpose, to invite more participation and to encourage the community to brainstorm. After the meeting, committees formed around projects and goals they had assessed.

Several months into the project year, the revitalization committee gained a reputation as a core group to discuss and organize projects and to inform and guide committees. The town administrator and town council members were active in the core committee, but it remained independent of local government. People from the community who normally did not like to attend meetings became active in projects.

The revitalization project in Crawford officially ended in February 1991, but the group continued to operate. Meeting with members of the Crawford Area Betterment Association, the two groups decided to merge. They continue working on goals and projects adopted by the revitalization group and operate under the by-laws of the betterment association. The revitalization project committees continue to complete projects and take on new ones.

Crawford	
1990 Population	221
Children, 0-4 Years	7
Youth, 5-17 Years	43
Seniors, 65+ Years	56
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-17.5%
Peak Census (Year)	268 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1913
County	Delta
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,019

Goals and Resources

The group has worked under the overall goal of promoting "the well-being of the Crawford community as a whole, without losing or damaging the things we love, such as the friendly atmosphere, scenic beauty and the quiet, small town, rural lifestyle." Guided by this statement and input from the town meeting and survey, the group established more specific objectives. They decided to develop tourist attractions, help existing businesses by providing technical assistance for home-based or cottage industries, improve the appearance of the community by initiating a community clean-up and beautification program and explore the possibility of creating a community newsletter.

The Team in Action

Crawford Rural Revitalization Project members believe the community survey helped give direction to their group. The group published a high-quality newsletter survey report with graphs and maps and distributed it throughout the community. They feel the newsletter provided exposure for the group and encouraged local ownership in the program.

To attract tourists to the Crawford area, the group envisioned a multi-use trail system in the North Fork area, with Crawford serving as a trailhead. When the Colorado Parks and Recreation Department needed volunteers to investigate the possibility of a trail from Crawford to a nearby lake, a retired couple living in Crawford took on the project. That trail was not feasible, but the couple pursued other possibilities. Now their work with local communities, private landowners, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and State Parks and Recreation has turned into a full-time commitment.

The Crawford Trails Committee now includes community members from nearby Hotchkiss and Paonia. Called the North Fork Trails Network, the group used technical assistance provided through CRRP to hire a local landscape architect to advise on a master plan for a network of new and existing trails. The group developed a five-year plan with guidance from the Bureau of Land Management.

A brochure promoting the North Fork Trails Network and 11 trails in the area was developed and soon will be ready for distribution.

In June 1990, the group hosted more than 100 "Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado." They built three miles of a new hiking trail on the North Rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument.

Locally, the group has proposed a three-phase plan for a trail on nearby Young's Peak, to include scenic overlooks and interpretive signage. The group hopes to fund this project by establishing a recreation district.

Over the next five to 10 years, people working on the network plan to build trails that connect Paonia, Crawford, Hotchkiss and Delta.

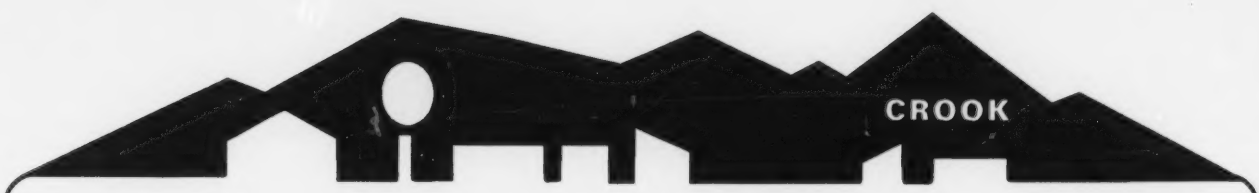
The Crawford Revitalization Project launched other projects to address the community's goals. The group co-sponsored a two-day workshop on home-based businesses. One result has been the development of "The Juniper Tree," a regional home-based product association that provides technical assistance to local home-based business owners, and is developing a marketing strategy for local products.

Town beautification took shape in the "Crawford Country Fall Cleanup" and new town signs. These two projects gave the group immediate visibility.

Still in the Plans

Revitalization efforts continue through the Crawford Area Betterment Association. The group feels some new projects are needed to spark new interest and enlist new citizen volunteers. The association may conduct another town survey for further direction.

One result has been the development of "The Juniper Tree," a regional home-based product association that provides technical assistance to local home-based business owners, and is developing a marketing strategy for local products.



One Voice

A Crook citizen encouraged the town board to apply for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). She also recruited people she thought would be interested in participating. The group began with 15 volunteers including historical society members, town board members, farmers and business people.

Crook	
1990 Population	148
Children, 0-4 Years	14
Youth, 5-17 Years	24
Seniors, 65+ Years	26
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-16.4%
Peak Census (Year)	259 (1950)
Year of Incorporation	1906
County	Logan
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,415

A Team Takes Shape

Crook Revitalization Committee members are "a people's committee," and act as a voice for Crook citizens. They also support town efforts for revitalization and community development. Until recently, the entire committee met once a month; three sub-committees convened as needed depending on the progress of their respective projects. Sub-committees organized around three large projects identified through a town survey the revitalization committee conducted.

Although the group can be characterized as project-oriented, members believe the most positive outcome of CRRP participation has been the involvement of both country and town people. Also, all age groups are working together for the first time.

The Plan

The Crook Revitalization Committee operated primarily to stimulate more citizens to take an interest in capitalizing on existing community opportunities. Three specific projects identified in a town survey became the focus. Multi-year projects include improving the town museum building, renovating an old school for use as a community center, and developing a trail system.

Getting to Work

First, the Crook Revitalization Committee conducted a household survey. The project became a tremendous group-building experience and a catalyst for community involvement. As one member expressed it, "The community survey got a lot of people thinking about why they live here and why they should become involved in helping their community."

Priorities for improvement voiced in survey results focused on projects the community discussed for years but never acted on. CRRP provided the group with information they needed to get started with projects, including how to access funding and assistance sources.

The group turned immediate attention to improving the Crook Museum, sponsored by the Crook Historical Society. The committee wanted to move quickly to preserve the museum's contents and ensure the safety and

convenience of its numerous visitors. In cooperation with the historical society, the committee decided to put steel siding on the building and install a ramp for handicap access. The group first had to revise the museum's by-laws to obtain non-profit status from the Internal Revenue Service. Since then, grant writing has yielded more than $5,000 toward the $15,000 the project requires.

Plans to renovate an old school building donated by the school district for use as a community center are progressing slowly for several reasons. The building's size makes renovation very costly; a leaking roof caused the building to deteriorate; debating ownership for funding purposes took time. Designs for renovating the building were drawn with CRRP technical assistance, and determining that the town owns the building will help the group raise grant funds for the project, perhaps through developing a special district.

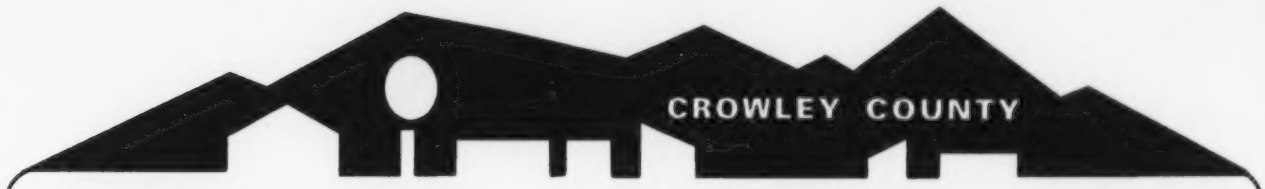
The group also is considering the possibility of converting some of the large building's space to apartments. Rental units would provide some steady income for community center upkeep, and address the town's housing shortage.

Residents who love to walk and enjoy the outdoors proposed a trail system. Trail system plans, developed through technical assistance provided by CRRP, laid out trails from the town through a nearby wildlife refuge. So far, the committee has gained cooperation from the State Division of Wildlife, which graded an area of the trail and a parking lot, and from the Forest Service, which granted funding for trees along the trail. The Colorado legislature appropriated $5,750 in Colorado Greenway Project funds, making the Duck Creek Trail one of only 12 applications to receive grant funds. Also, the trail is one of eight pilot projects to receive a Great Outdoors Colorado award from the governor's office.

Future Plans

After taking the summer off, the Crook Revitalization Committee is meeting regularly again as developments arise with any of the three on-going projects. Group members believe they will continue until projects are accomplished.

"The community survey got a lot of people thinking about why they live here and why they should become involved in helping their community."



Applying to CRRP

Crowley County's application to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) pointed to several areas of need related to community economic development. These development concerns represented needs of several county communities, especially Olney Springs, Ordway and Sugar City, as well as the entire county.

Crowley County	
1990 Population	3,946
Children, 0-4 Years	220
Youth, 5-17 Years	609
Seniors, 65+ Years	575
% Pop. Change 1980-90	32.1%
Peak Census (Year)	6,383 (1920)
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,569

Developing New from Old

When CRRP began in Crowley County, 22 members were meeting as a community improvement action team. As the team evolved over time, it incorporated under the official title of the Crowley County Economic Development Council Inc.

The council consisted of representatives from local governments, business and other private interests. It still is an autonomous group that receives no funding from the local public sector, but enjoys a good working relationship with county and municipal governments.

In its early years, the council's primary focus was to bring a correctional facility to the county. Council participants planned to improve the county's economy with the prison's workforce and visitor population increase to Crowley County. Unfortunately, even after the Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility was completed near Ordway, the staff continued to commute from Canon City and Buena Vista. The county spent money to attract the facility, but did not realize much of an economic boost afterward.

A highly significant council activity early in its revitalization effort was the identification of eight important issues described as a basis for prioritizing community improvement goals. Those issues included insurance, technology, assets and natural resources, values and ethics, human resources, business and industry development, economic development and public and private partnerships.

Each issue became the responsibility of from one to four volunteers with special interest in that issue. In total, 10 different individuals participated on the eight committees. In general, the work of each committee included an exploration and description of related problems and opportunities, strengths and limitations, suggested action steps, and resources needed or available to achieve action.

In addition, the council networked with the Southeast Tourism Council Inc., the Southeast Colorado Economic Development District, the Southeast Colorado Enterprise/ Development organization and all regional chambers of commerce. While the group did not achieve the level of credibility and recognition it desired, members made considerable progress in establishing a network.

Setting Goals

In addition to the eight committees' activities, the council identified one major, long-range goal to achieve during the revitalization effort. The council decided to construct a community building to serve county citizens and organizations.

Action!

Crowley County's council hoped to bolster economic, social and cultural development. Constructing a community building would provide an enhanced capacity for county citizens and their organizations to work together in pursuit of long-range solutions. At the end of one year of direct participation in CRRP, tangible progress was yet to be seen. However, the council's remaining volunteers continue to work on the building.

Another major project was the group's participation in "Crowley County 2000", a one-day conference to brainstorm solutions and set goals. The conference, held in Ordway in January 1989, combined resources from CRRP and the Crowley County Economic Development Council.

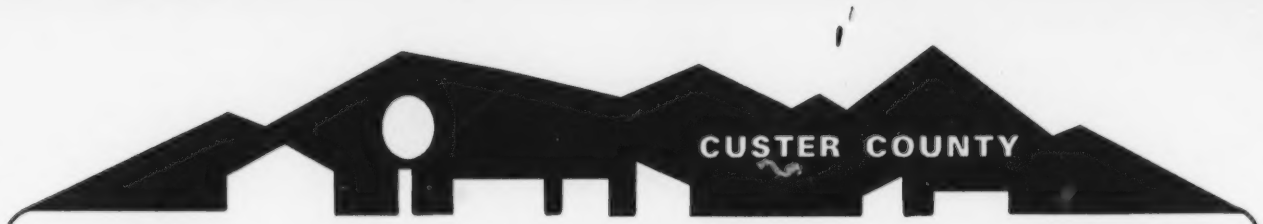
Out of CC2000, subsequent gatherings focused on priority projects that include:

* developing an environmentally and economically sound landfill;
* finding a solution to the area's poor water quality;
* attracting a cultural development specialist, perhaps an intern, to develop the area's cultural opportunities;
* developing a plan to deal with the spiraling cost of insurance locally;
* and finally, making the Arkansas Valley Correctional facility more economically beneficial to the county.

Committees organized around these topics continue to meet.

Future Plans

Though the council's activity level has diminished somewhat, a continuing council membership serves as an action team for community improvement activities.



All Aboard

A Custer County commissioner first proposed applying to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project for Westcliffe and Silver Cliff, two adjacent towns unaccustomed to working together on revitalization efforts. Both communities fought a severe local economic downturn when a nearby ski area closed. The commissioner hoped the towns would investigate the possibility of re-opening the ski area with new ownership/management. He also hoped the two communities might cooperate to seek other opportunities for economic development.

The commissioner developed a list of people to serve on the Custer County Revitalization Committee, representing broad participation from both communities, especially among business owners, farmers and ranchers.

Pulling Together

Twenty-four people attended a regional CRRP leadership training program and a local follow-up session covering strategic planning. Soon after, Custer County Revitalization Committee participation began to decline due to members' other commitments and differing opinions about the group's direction. However, 15 active members continued, and the group established goals and met twice a month. All members alternated as meeting facilitators.

Although the revitalization committee has completed several projects, greatest success has resulted from individual members' applying what they learned through CRRP to projects of personal interest. One dream was to develop an historic railroad district in Westcliffe. Proponents applied and were accepted into Colorado Initiatives, a financial assistance program for technical support and implementation of local development projects. Several revitalization committee members also work with this program. In addition, they helped form and are active in the new Merchants' Association in Westcliffe and a countywide Chamber of Commerce.

Custer County	
1990 Population	1,926
Children, 0-4 Years	114
Youth, 5-17 Years	396
Seniors, 65+ Years	284
% Pop. Change 1980-90	26.0%
Peak Census (Year)	8,080 (1880)
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,513

Taking Aim

The committee initially set out to improve communications, coordination and cooperation throughout the county. Specific economic and community development goals included...

- ... agricultural, business and tourism development;
- ... project financing;
- ... promotion and public relations;
- ... and future program development.

The committee defined two major areas for local study and research: recreation--facilities, programming, and sources of funding; and economic development--creating more jobs, and

downtown revitalization.

That's Progress

The Custer County Revitalization Committee has accomplished several activities and projects. They have...

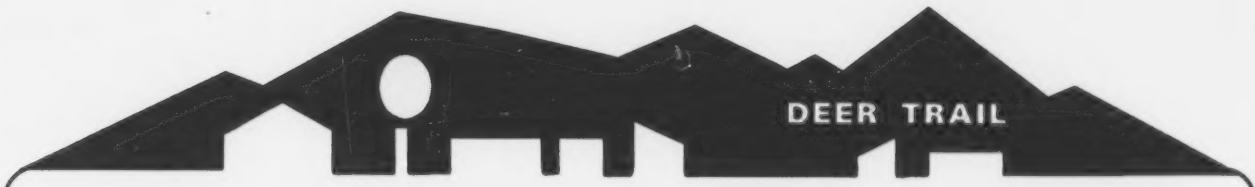
* sponsored a community workshop to increase community participation, gather information and citizens' ideas, and develop action plans for tourism, economic development, recreation, and agriculture;
* conducted a county-wide survey and held two community meetings to discuss survey results;
* developed a committee newsletter;
* hired a Community Activities Coordinator who helped develop and post a calendar of local events and design a summer recreation program;
* planned and designed a community center;
* built a shop and equipment storage facility shared by Westcliffe and Silver Cliff;
* and encouraged hiring a circuit-riding services administrator for both towns.

Two other projects resulted when committee members pursued areas of their own interest for the betterment of their community. One member is interested in the preservation of historic buildings and the heritage of the Wet Mountain Valley, where Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are located. Using grant funds from the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities, a small group of people have refurbished part of the 100-year-old Westcliffe schoolhouse. They have incorporated as the Valley Park, Recreation and Youth Center, Inc. to manage the schoolhouse, which serves both as museum and teen center. They have set up an exhibit of historic data and photographs collected from older natives of the area. This group also is interviewing older residents of the communities and preserving on tape recordings their accounts of life in the area.

Several revitalization committee members who call their group "All Aboard Westcliffe" also have established an historic railroad district to celebrate Westcliffe's heritage. This group acquired, moved and refurbished a caboose to use as a visitor center. Community volunteers provided all clean-up and fix-up efforts for the caboose. In the summer of 1991, nearly 15,000 people used the visitor center. "All Aboard Westcliffe" also hopes the visitor center will anchor the historic railroad district. The group has established non-profit status and has purchased other railroad cars the same vintage as the caboose, and plans to move them to the district. The group hopes to purchase and refurbish several of the original railroad buildings standing near the visitor center.

Down the Line

What began as an attempt to try and revive the local ski area has turned into local citizens' efforts to discover and develop unique assets of Custer County. Using leadership skills and knowledge of resources gained through participation in CRRP, members of the revitalization committee are aggressively pursuing community and economic development options for their area.



"Bringing the [Arapahoe County] Fair to town was an integral part of Deer Trail's economic redevelopment strategy."

Deer Trail	
1990 Population	476
Children, 0-4 Years	28
Youth, 5-17 Years	109
Seniors, 65+ Years	79
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-2.0%
Peak Census (Year)	764 (1960)
Year of Incorporation	1920
County	Arapahoe
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$20,663

At the Start

In late 1988, Deer Trail's mayor learned about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) and asked local residents to apply to become a project town for 1989. The time was right and the need for revitalization was apparent. Deer Trail had completed a low-cost senior housing construction project and people were looking for ways to continue town improvements. Once a thriving livestock transportation center and commercial hub, Deer Trail suffered a devastating flood in 1965 and never fully recovered. At early meetings, 15 to 20 interested citizens attended, including several town board members. About five people served as an active core group through the whole year. The committee was organized as a separate entity from town government.

Spring Training

Deer Trail Revitalization Committee members represented people of all ages and income levels. The diverse group started out with several distinct advantages: Deer Trail already centered around a strongly supported local school, and townspeople had experience working together on major projects. They built the new school, put in a community pool and tennis courts, built senior housing, and furnished a town park and historical museum.

Also, the revitalization committee came together with a pre-conceived plan--they wanted to re-establish a downtown commercial base the flood had wiped out and attract new businesses and families to town.

Team members began by participating in CRRP leadership training. A town survey was done a few years earlier, so with a clearcut mandate from town residents, they began to look for projects and financing.

Outlining a Plan

The Deer Trail Revitalization Committee felt its goals were fairly straightforward. They wanted to bring in new businesses, spruce up existing businesses and homes, capitalize on the historical significance of the town, engage citizens of all ages in the revitalization process and capitalize on the town's already strong local pride.

Ready...Action!

One of the team's first projects was a

town clean-up day. The committee got a majority of the town's residents to pick up trash, move abandoned vehicles and old machinery--some of which ended up in the town museum--and had one old mobile home, an eyesore for years, hauled away. Other property owners cut weeds and planted flowers and shrubs. A few even painted homes and sheds.

The group also participated in the Colorado Statewide Paint-a-Thon, where several people worked together to paint a home for its owners, who otherwise could not have done so. The committee hopes to repeat that project, with better participation next time.

With help from the town and local service clubs, the committee also organized a Christmas decoration program. A local blacksmith made frames shaped like Christmas trees, bells, angels and stars. The rural electric association donated plug-ins, residents strung lights and tinsel on the frames, and town maintenance workers put them up on lightpoles for the holidays. Other clubs also donated wooden and plastic decorations. The women of the Jockeyettes Club put up a huge lighted tree, visible from all over town and Interstate Highway 70.

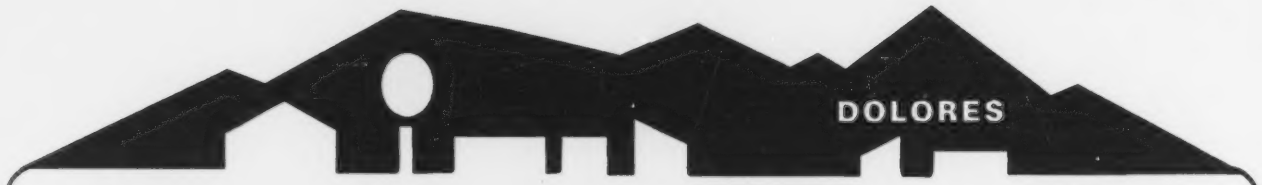
Next, the committee chose to use part of its revitalization funds to support the 1990 Arapahoe County Fair. Bringing the fair to town was an integral part of Deer Trail's economic redevelopment strategy. The committee generated funds to buy a banner, publicize special events, repaint a billboard and hire a coordinator to publicize the fair. The 1990 fair marked the first time in five years the event had been held in Arapahoe County. Arapahoe County lost its fairgrounds several years earlier, forcing the county to rent the National Western Stockshow Complex in Denver for its annual fair. Deer Trail already had a rodeo grounds that in 1869 was the site of the world's first rodeo. In years since, it saw many rodeos, fairs, and car and horse races. Community residents asked county commissioners to award the town the fair site. A conflict of interest between eastern county residents and the more heavily concentrated western county population ensued. Deer Trail persisted, and county residents and officials put together a well-attended event in 1990. By fair time in 1991, more improvements were made to the historic Jockey Club Grounds and the fair went on again, with considerably less controversy than the first year.

As a direct result of working together on the fair, Deer Trail has realized economic and emotional benefits. Local pride and volunteer spirit are stronger than ever, as evidenced by the brightly planted flower beds and well-groomed yards around town. Also, the few local merchants already in business have enjoyed the several thousand paying visitors the fair brings to town each summer.

On the Horizon

Although the committee no longer meets, its projects have been carried on by other groups in the community. The Fair Volunteers Committee will continue, as will the Christmas Decorating Committee and the Paint-a-Thon. One project the committee discussed but never completed was bringing a grocery co-op to town. Those discussions continue, with strong local support.

Deer Trail residents are justifiably proud of their accomplishments.



"We've found if we take time to improve communication and find out where the community stands on things, then we are in a position to act rather than react."

Dolores	
1990 Population	866
Children, 0-4 Years	74
Youth, 5-17 Years	195
Seniors, 65+ Years	145
% Pop. Change 1980-90	8.0%
Peak Census (Year)	866 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1900
County	Montezuma
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,572

Open Invitation

The Dolores Town Board invited the entire town to participate in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). The Dolores Community Revitalization Project, also known as the Dolores Kellogg Committee, began with 25 participants. The group experienced some turnover and now has 15-20 core group members, with more people working in various sub-committees. Early representation on the committee included town board members; members of service organizations including Rotary Club, Eastern Star, Masons and Future Farmers of America; school administrators, teachers and students; ranchers; business owners; a minister; senior citizens and chamber of commerce members. This group began by attending leadership training workshops conducted by CRRP staff.

Building Bridges

When the Dolores Kellogg Committee began to meet, community revitalization efforts had been stalled by mistrust and poor communication following a recall election two years earlier. The committee formed with the hope that they might mediate the community's healing process. Before tackling community improvement projects, the committee served as a forum for discussion and socializing.

The Kellogg committee has been challenged to deal with conflict and build bridges of understanding. One member shared an important lesson she learned in the process. "Now I know I can work with people that I don't see eye to eye with. We can get things done even though we don't agree on things." Another member summed up the group's growth. "We've found if we take time to improve communication and find out where the community stands on things, then we are in a position to act rather than react."

The Dolores Kellogg Committee experimented with procedures in early meetings. The first meetings were very structured, but this discouraged participation, and some people left the committee. Informal meetings, often over lunch, proved more successful. Now, with everyone invited to join discussions, meetings have become local forums. The group discusses ideas and decides how to guide the sub-committees' work. Sub-committees meet as needed to complete projects.

Moving forward and accomplishing projects now, the group has broadened its

function within the community: it facilitates action among other groups that are represented on the Kellogg committee; it takes on projects of its own; it serves as a vehicle for anyone in the community to get involved and raise ideas; and it has become a source of vision and positive image for the community.

Setting Goals

The Dolores Kellogg Committee set two goals. First, they worked toward improving local communication and trust. Members now strive to be supportive of each other to ensure stability within the group. They also worked to complete projects that would build a positive, progress-oriented spirit in Dolores.

Working Together

The Kellogg committee's first project used CRRP assistance to conduct a community survey. Results indicated people's lack of community involvement and a strong desire to become involved. The local newspaper published a series of articles explaining the survey results, providing the group with high visibility.

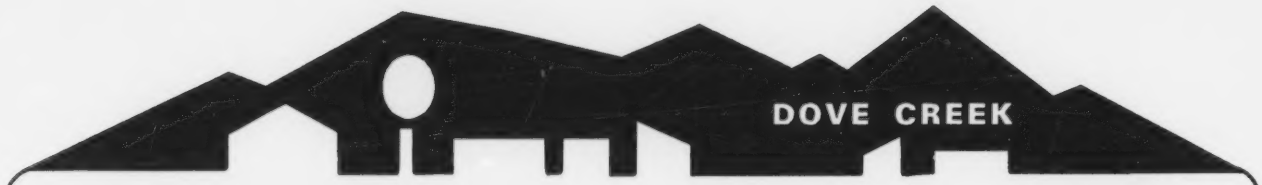
Cleaning up Flanders Park, the Dolores town square, proved to be a successful community-building project as well as a needed physical improvement. With assistance from town crews who laid new concrete and replaced the sprinkler system, 50 volunteers from Dolores and the outlying area brought their garden tools and cleaned, weeded, trimmed, planted flowers and spread rock chips. The Kellogg committee served hot dogs and hamburgers and the community provided pot-luck side dishes. About 150 people celebrated after the town square's facelift by feasting, socializing and enjoying a local folk and bluegrass musician.

The Kellogg committee also organized many events around the Christmas season. They sponsored old-fashioned Christmas activities throughout December, resulting in tremendous community involvement and good cheer.

Kellogg committee members helped with many more projects, as well. They supported the Dolores Historical Society's efforts to provide a home for the town's historic Galloping Goose train; helped establish the Women's Resource Center in Dolores; and wrote a proposal for funds to build a trail from the Dolores town park to a nearby reservoir

Moving Forward

Dolores Kellogg Committee members feel the group will continue to meet and take on projects well into the future. Committee members feel the future of the group can be simply characterized as "moving forward."



"Revitalization committee members consider its success to be rooted in its sensitivity to local dynamics."

Dove Creek	
1990 Population	643
Children, 0-4 Years	50
Youth, 5-17 Years	145
Seniors, 65+ Years	87
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-22.2%
Peak Census (Year)	986 (1960)
Year of Incorporation	1939
County	Dolores
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$16,951

Networking

Dove Creek's involvement with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) began when several people heard about the project through their respective professional contacts: a school superintendent, a chamber of commerce member and a university alumnus. Chamber members, with the town board's support, completed the project application. The chamber then was instrumental in organizing the Dove Creek Revitalization Committee, made up of chamber of commerce members, town board members, business owners, county employees and a farmer. Sixteen people formed the core group through the year of the program.

Building a Team

In response to survey results, the revitalization committee organized into three sub-committees, each addressing main issues targeted in the community survey. Sub-committees continued to function throughout the year.

Revitalization committee members consider its success to be rooted in its sensitivity to local dynamics. Well aware of resistance to change among some members of the community, the committee proceeded cautiously. The group also credits its success to a strong alliance with the chamber of commerce, rather than town government. The Dove Creek Revitalization Committee had the full support of the town board but functioned independent of local government.

Plotting a Course

Guided by town survey results, the revitalization committee established three overall goals--economic diversification, enhancing town services and town beautification. The group then focused on what members thought were attainable objectives.

Economic diversification efforts focused on a resource already present in the community--senior citizens. The committee decided to help promote the community as a retirement area. The town already had good health services and a senior citizen center. Recognizing the need for more services before the town could support an influx of retirees, committee members focused on developing senior housing. They also wanted to encourage use of the town's community/recreation center, so they set an objective to develop and promote recreational opportunities.

Working Together

Cleaning up the town became the first step in the town beautification process. Group members arranged for trash and large-item removal on private property.

The committee considers its town survey a tremendous success, with an 87-percent response rate. Survey Committee members served as captains of survey teams and recruited volunteers from the community to work on their teams. Thirty volunteers distributed and collected surveys.

Because 85 percent of survey respondents rated the need for trash ordinance legislation high, a town beautification committee formed to take on this project. Previous attempts were unsuccessful, and with strong opposition from some property owners, the committee had to proceed cautiously. Members obtained copies of other towns' ordinances and combined them to form the most workable plan for Dove Creek. A two-year process of compromise, revision and close work with the town board resulted in a Dove Creek trash ordinance adopted in August 1991.

During its CRRP involvement, the revitalization committee also started to develop a senior housing site. Southwest Community Resources--an agency that serves as a senior/low-income housing authority--is partially financing a housing unit for seven couples, one single and a caretaker. The committee's original goal was to attract middle- to upper-income retirees with this facility, but it turned into a low-income project.

To develop local recreation opportunities, the revitalization committee approached the town board with a proposal to fund the salary of a full-time recreation director. Local citizens strongly supported this request. The plan led several people to form the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board. A recreation director was hired in December 1990 and has developed many youth and adult prorams.

The Dove Creek Revitalization Committee officially functioned for the year it received CRRP assistance and then dis-banded. However, some members applied for involvement in Colorado Initiatives (CI), a financial assistance program that supports technical assistance and implementation of local development projects. The 1991-1992 project they chose to work on is a bike- trail system that links the upper and lower Dolores River Canyon, and connects trail systems in Utah and Colorado.

Looking Ahead

Some Dove Creek Revitalization Committee members joined other interested citizens in the Colorado Initiatives bike-trail project. When the trail system is complete, on-going revitalization efforts will continue through the Dove Creek Chamber of Commerce. Those involved will continue to work toward self-sufficiency in local services, and slow, small-scale economic growth and diversification.

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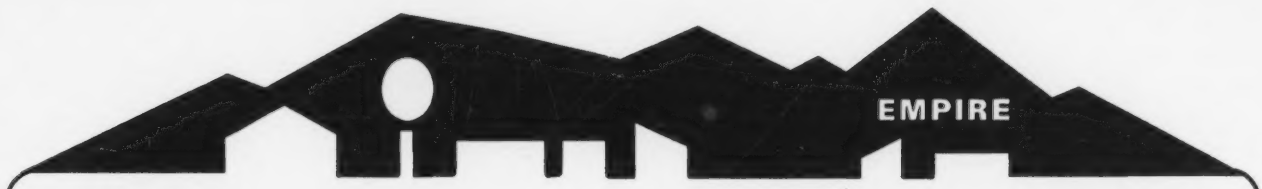


Just Being Neighborly

After Idaho Springs--Empire's neighbor down the road--became a Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) town, Empire knew it, too, could benefit from the project's technical assistance and leadership training. Empire knew before becoming involved with CRRP that it needed a visitors' center. In fact, the town even acquired the land. At that stage, the town knew it needed expert advice and asked to become a project town. About 15 town residents met initially, drawing on the experience and support of three Idaho Springs residents. In December 1990, about 20 people met and formed the Empire Revitalization Committee. Currently, eight members continue to meet regularly.

A Team to Call Our Own

Five town residents traveled to Colorado Springs in February 1991, for multi-community leadership training sponsored by CRRP. Those five returned to Empire energized and ready to lead the rest of the community into action. Several committee members also attended the Limon Grantsmanship Workshop, looking into ways to finance town projects. One of the ideas they brought back was the possibility of establishing a non-profit 501(c)3 organization through which to fund community projects.

Dare to Dream

Empire committee members wanted to arrange financing and secure expert advice for completing projects already in the "dream" stage, and to offer local residents a forum to present their ideas for improving services for Empire visitors. Thousands of travelers pass through town annually. Residents want to provide enough reasons for them to stop on their way through, whether for shopping, lodging, dining or rest stops. Empire citizens are concerned that any projects be carefully planned.

Empire	
Population	401
Children, 0-4 Years	44
Youth, 5-17 Years	99
Seniors, 65+ Years	15
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-5.2%
Peak Census (Year)	423 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1882
County	Clear Creek
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$16,379

Dreams into Reality

Empire became infamous for issuing frequent speeding tickets. To improve the town's image, during Christmas of 1990 the town marshal pulled over every car with out-of-state plates-- speeding or not--and presented the startled travelers with a holiday gift basket, courtesy of the town and the revitalization team. The team led fundraising efforts to distribute the gift baskets to holiday travelers. That project provided a good opportunity for town residents and team members to cooperate on a visitors' program. It also gave a much-needed boost to Empire's image, because Denver-area media picked up the story and ran it in prime time.

As the team swung into full-scale operation, the first major project was to arrange for outside experts to consult on the early stages of the visitors' center project. The town had already bought the land, and with CRRP assistance, team members called in a university landscape architect to draw up plans for site development, entry and exit plans, and sign placement. Next, the team invited a university architect to submit plans to convert a small cabin on the town's new land into a visitors' center with a huge deck.

Team members moved an old one-room schoolhouse to the park and visitors' center site. In conjunction with Empire's annual Frog Rodeo in 1991, the town celebrated "School's Out, School's In." Team members hope to restore the old school and make it an historic attraction for travelers.

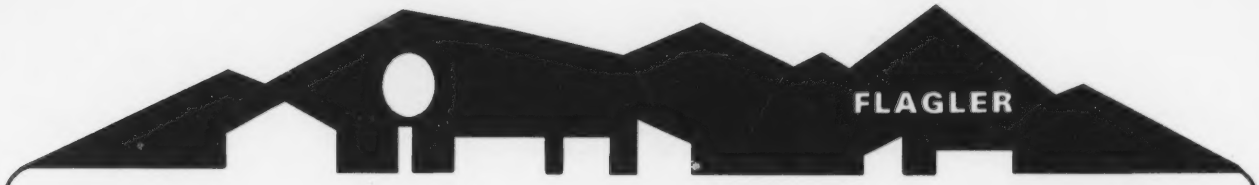
"To improve the town's image, during Christmas of 1990 the town marshal pulled over every car with out-of-state plates--speeding or not--and presented the startled travelers with a holiday gift basket, courtesy of the town and the revitalization team."

Looking Beyond

Team members have begun making inquiries about two other possible long-term projects. Through CRRP, they have contacted a university transportation class to determine if the students are interested in doing a feasibility study to relocate U.S. Highway 40, which currently bisects Empire.

Another idea is to explore building a golf course near Empire. The team still is investigating that project idea.

With a committed group regularly attending meetings and working on projects, the Empire Revitalization Committee likely will continue to make a positive impact on the community.



Called to Serve

Flagler's school district superintendent learned about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) through contacts in rural education programs. With the town board, he applied for CRRP participation and recruited townspeople he thought would work well as a revitalization committee. The original applicants also issued an open invitation for community participation. The Flagler Community Revitalization Committee started with 15 people including local merchants, service organizations, students, school administrators, town board members and farmers.

Flagler	
1990 Population	564
Children, 0-4 Years	35
Youth, 5-17 Years	107
Seniors, 65+ Years	133
% Pop. Change 1980-90	2.5%
Peak Census (Year)	793 (1950)
Year of Incorporation	1916
County	Kit Carson
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$19,676

A Solid Group

The Flagler Community Revitalization Committee expanded to include 20 regular participants. The group established several sub-committees around pressing local topics and issues. They focused attention on community education, community television, recreation, entrepreneurship, retaining existing businesses and later, hazardous-waste incineration.

The group worked to become an umbrella organization to coordinate economic development and community improvement efforts of various groups in town. They also served as a communication channel among the town board, schools and other organizations.

Plotting a Course

The revitalization committee first targeted economic development. The group wanted to organize a communitywide economic development effort to create jobs and encourage growth. They also wanted to offer educational programs to improve the business environment in the community, hoping to help existing businesses survive and attract new ones to the area. They recognize town infrastructure limitations and realize they should confine growth accordingly.

Getting Busy

The Flagler Community Revitalization Committee has been active in initiating projects in the community. Many are long-term and in various stages of completion.

The committee remains committed to its goals of developing community education options and obtaining cable television service. Acting on a request from the revitalization team, the school board hired a local resident to be half-time community education director and half-time teacher. The committee is exploring ways to incorporate economic development curriculum into local school programs to encourage students to settle in Flagler and explore entrepreneurial options.

The group is working with a cable TV company to serve Flagler and link with the Mind Extension University from Colorado State University. They also are working to schedule children's educational programs.

To develop recreational options for the community, the revitalization committee is working with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to develop Flagler Lake into a combination wildlife habitat and recreation area.

The group also is working to keep the local drugstore in operation by persuading the current owner to stay, or by attracting a new owner.

One controversial project, related to industry attraction and job development, has particularly challenged the group. In December 1990, the group heard from a company looking for a community willing to accept a new hazardous-waste incineration facility. The group established a sub-committee to investigate, and members met with company representatives. A series of community meetings were held where the company presented its proposal for building and operating a plant two miles outside of Flagler. The company estimated that the plant would bring 60 families into the community.

After these meetings, the community seemed to respond positively, so the sub-committee decided to continue studying the project. Members researched issues associated with the company and the industry. They verified the waste company's credibility with the Colorado Health Department. They also worked with Kit Carson County to investigate zoning regulations surrounding hazardous-waste incineration. In addition, they hired a consultant to guide the community through the process of investigating possible positive and negative consequences of the industry.

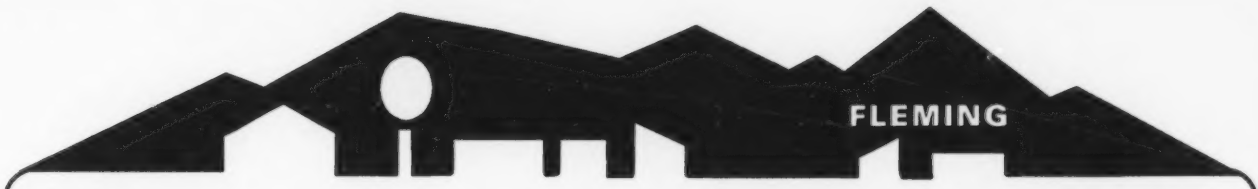
Within months, strong opposition to the idea surfaced. Opponents--mostly from communities near Flagler--organized a campaign focused on the possible health and environmental risks associated with hazardous-waste incineration. Major national and international environmental organizations got involved and sparked a highly emotional reaction. Many environmentalists actually came to Flagler to attend meetings and work on the issue.

Revitalization committee members were taken aback at the response, because they had the community's best interest at heart and had intended merely to study economic development prospects and options. Members feel they did not have the necessary resources to address an issue as emotional as hazardous-waste incineration.

Despite the fact that the group found itself in the center of heated debate, the committee remained intact; members supported one another through the difficult time. They did not give up on their goals for community improvement, and continue with projects. They also may continue to investigate the option of attracting the incineration plant at some later time.

On the Drawing Board

The Flagler Community Revitalization Committee will continue meeting as long as necessary to complete current projects. They also will continue to coordinate work on economic development options with other community organizations.



"Awakening the community and building community spirit became FARE's first order of business."

Fleming	
1990 Population	344
Children, 0-4 Years	27
Youth, 5-17 Years	67
Seniors, 65+ Years	78
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-11.3%
Peak Census (Year)	400 (1940)
Year of Incorporation	1917
County	Logan
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,415

FARE Takes Off

The Fleming Association for a Revitalized Economy (FARE) had just organized when the town staff learned about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). The town clerk and the town superintendent, both raised in Fleming, recognized the community's critical need for revitalization. They coordinated FARE in the spring of 1988 and have since devoted much of their professional and personal time to the association.

Two town staff members discussed what they thought was needed, obtained town council authorization for the association and for their coordination time and hand-picked enthusiastic people from the community. They organized the people they wanted to work with, set goals and objectives and held a community meeting to present FARE's plans. FARE started with between 40 and 50 people; that number has remained fairly stable.

Pulling Together

FARE met regularly, and group members organized into committees. Since then, the committees have met often; the full group meets less frequently. Two coordinators keep lines of communication open between committees, through word of mouth and a bi-monthly community newsletter.

Although town government has some influence, FARE is citizen-driven with little emphasis placed on political boundaries or intentions. Geographically, FARE follows school district boundaries, and local schools contribute to and are supported by FARE's efforts.

FARE committees included brochure, tourism, family and senior interest, housing and business sites, retail, investments, and industry/ag-improvements.

Setting Goals

As the group's name implies, the overall goal of FARE was to revitalize the community's economy. Fleming's school enrollment at one time warranted enlarging the school. FARE coordinators decided they wanted FARE to stimulate the community once again to attract more individuals, families and businesses.

Before they could get the community to support their efforts, members of FARE had to tackle local lethargy. Awakening the community and building community spirit became FARE's first order of business.

FARE members also recognized that their town infrastructure was incapable of handling growth and needed improvements. Infrastructure improvements were addressed on the municipal level, with support from the association.

Pursuing their overall goal of economic revitalization, FARE members agreed to draft a brochure describing Fleming's positive attributes; recognize and develop possible tourist attractions in the area; determine how to attract senior citizens and families to the area; assess available business sites, house sites and lots, and list information; help keep existing businesses viable; and locate, define and list funding sources for business and industry in the area.

Getting Busy

FARE's coordinators feel their most important accomplishment was awakening community members to Fleming's strong points. The town clerk summarized the most important function of the group: "We made people aware of why they live in this community and why people would want to move here."

Through consistent energy and action, the group has met most of their objectives. They published two brochures, one highlighting summer activities and one with more general community information. Technical assistance provided through CRRP led to a town logo design. FARE developed a highway park with two museum buildings, one a town museum and one a craft shop. The park also has restrooms, picnic shelters, an RV park and dump station, and a monument designed and built by a local resident, dedicated to Fleming's founding fathers.

Community volunteers developed "Welcome to Fleming" packets for newcomers that include information about services, education, organizations and businesses.

In cooperation with a nearby hospital district, FARE set up a satellite health clinic that now operates on a weekly basis in Fleming.

Volunteers have developed a list of available businesses, houses and lots. It is updated regularly and kept at town hall. The committee sponsored a feasibility study; results show a need for senior housing units in town.

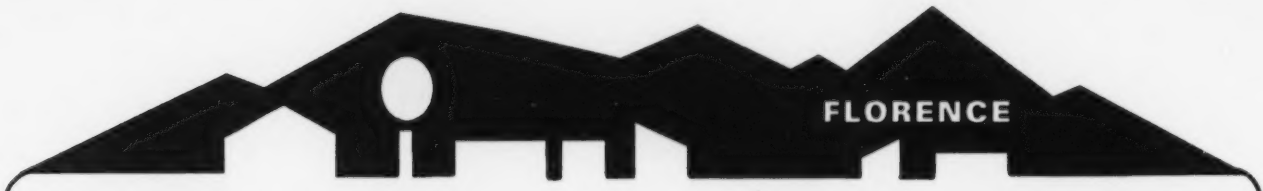
FARE held a workshop on small-business marketing and success which produced and implemented two projects: low-cost advertising in a bi-monthly local newsletter; and marketing local businesses to travelers through display ads and brochures at information centers.

FARE's investment committee incorporated as the Fleming Economic Development Corp. and will help fund appropriate business or industry for the area.

Association members developed and distributed a promotional information packet and videotape to financial institutions, county officials, state legislators and state agencies. The packet promotes Fleming as an ideal location for business and industry.

And Next...

Even though FARE has been successful in setting the foundation for growth in the Fleming area, the group's coordinators still ponder the future of their community. With so little congressional representation, and with economic and societal trends taking people away from agricultural communities, they feel the odds of turning the local economy around are stacked against them. Nevertheless, they will not give up. They now plan to address job development in nearby larger towns, hoping more jobs will bring more families to Fleming.



1991 Vision Statement: "A healthy, progressive and caring town that celebrates the past, with adequate facilities and services to support well-planned growth, while maintaining rural life quality. A community where our people have a voice in leadership and are ready to meet the challenges of the future."

Florence	
1990 Population	2,990
Children, 0-4 Years	117
Youth, 5-17 Years	630
Seniors, 65+ Years	695
% Pop. Change 1980-90	.1%
Peak Census (Year)	3,728 (1900)
Year of Incorporation	1887
County	Fremont
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,157

Ready to Revitalize

After hearing about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) the Town of Florence applied in the first year of the project. Although not accepted that year, Florence renewed its effort and applied again. The effort paid off, and more than 100 people arrived at a November 1990 town meeting of the Florence Revitalization Committee. Those early participants included the mayor and representatives from city council, the fire department, the chamber of commerce, the city work crew, churches, senior citizens, youth groups, business people, and trade and industry. About 20 people continue to meet.

Leaders in the Making

In early 1991, several committee members attended multi-community leadership training in Colorado Springs. Largely because of the mayor and council's involvement, the revitalization committee has enjoyed a good relationship with town government. The Florence committee adopted a "horizontal" communications model first in which members volunteered for responsibilities, rather than being assigned to them.

Envisioning Goals

One of the earliest committee tasks was to formulate a community vision statement, to focus the committee's efforts in a very public way. The resulting statement was widely displayed and discussed in town, with far-reaching consequences.

The committee's first goals were to get people to communicate, and to get citizens to take initiative, not wait for the town government to announce a need.

At the same time, the Florence Revitalization Committee is still a part of other community organizations and networks. They remain active participants in Family Community Leadership programs. City residents use Colorado State University Cooperative Extension more frequently and in more depth than previously.

The greatest impact of the revitalization process in Florence has been the emergence of distinct community pride. People are more willing to look to the future of their city and are willing to work to achieve their vision.

One Block at a Time

Working from a two-year-old survey of local residents, the committee formulated its initial plans.

Florence's major project was a downtown revitalization campaign. The main committee divided into five subcommittees, one each to take charge of equipment, paint, volunteer labor force, merchants and planning.

The planning committee met weekly to set goals for tasks to be accomplished each week. The project included approximately two or three weeks of preparation time and eight or nine weeks of actual labor. At one time, as many as 30 volunteers worked on the downtown area. About 60 people in all participated. Two full blocks of historic downtown buildings received much-needed cleaning and painting during summer 1991.

The committee then decided to commission a marketing study to determine optimum placement of new welcome and city limits signs. The signage committee met to review survey results at the end of August 1991. They also reviewed a prototype sign that a university professor contacted through CRRP designed. The wooden sign, about the size of a speed limit sign, portrays one of Florence's historic buildings, with space beneath for removable plaques publicizing special events.

Another of the committee's projects was to help with the town picnic, held on Pioneer Day. It was an opportunity to pull the town together, and for long-time residents and newcomers to socialize. The revitalization committee sponsored a petting zoo and information booth entitled "What's Your Pet Project?" Besides answering visitors' and residents' questions, the booth served as a distribution center for a survey on local project needs. Responses point to the need for recreation programs and a citywide Neighborhood Watch network.

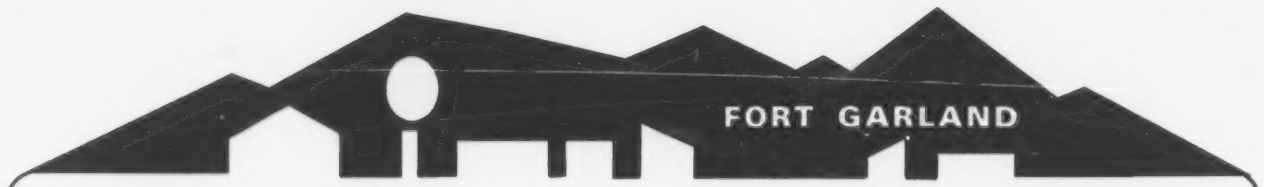
In November, Florence hosted the Antonito team, so revitalization committee members from Antonito could see Florence's downtown improvements and learn how they accomplished them one block at a time.

In just a few short months, the 1991 Florence Vision Statement has been a rallying force. The committee reviews it each time they meet, and have posted it in windows and storefronts throughout town. The statement already has had a direct impact at the local high school. For the first time, seniors are being required to complete 15 hours of meaningful community service before graduation. Committee members are excited about this innovative program and are anxious to have energetic young men and women involved in the community.

More to Come

Because the winter holidays are a difficult time for volunteers to meet in Florence, the last regular meeting of 1991 was the mid-November meeting, when the committee recessed until spring.

The committee's role as the vehicle for change in Florence remains a vital one. The community associates the committee with change. Among the committee's long-range plans are enhancing city parks, trimming trees, assisting homeowners to upgrade sidewalks, starting "Decathlon", a youth and adult summer recreation program, and finding more ways to get young people and senior citizens involved in revitalizing Florence.



" The great thing about this project is that we discovered people's talents and people discovered their own talents. "

Fort Garland	
1990 Population	882
Children, 0-4 Years	64
Youth, 5-17 Years	191
Seniors, 65 + Years	130
% Pop. Change 1980-90	36.1%
Peak Census (Year)	N. A.
Year of Incorporation	Non Inc.
County	Costilla
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,379

Bridge Building

A citizen of Fort Garland learned about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) through his involvement with the Costilla County Economic Development Council. The Fort Garland Revitalization Committee attracted 12 community members through an open invitation for participation. Group members are proud that from the start, their involvement with CRRP has brought together people from different backgrounds, bridging gaps that previously hindered community development efforts. People from hispanic and anglo backgrounds, along with newcomers to the community who live outside of town in newly developed sub-divisions now work together to improve their community.

The Dynamic Duo

Although some fluctuation in attendance and involvement occurred, the Fort Garland Revitalization Committee has remained a vital community force. Seven of the original 12 committee members still are active. The group meets monthly and although informal in nature, they do have elected officers--a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. The chairperson's position revolves every three months to allow everyone equal influence and opportunity to enhance personal leadership skills. The group does not have official sub-committees; rather, individuals accomplish projects when needed, with members calling on other citizens they think are interested in a particular project.

Members credit the success of the group to a husband and wife team who continually served as the organizing and energizing force behind the group. Native to the area, the couple knows every person and every issue in the community well. The trust and respect they command has in turn helped the community trust the revitalization committee.

The survival and stability of the committee has become essential to Fort Garland. The committee now serves a vital role: that of an "unofficial government" in an unincorporated town. Most projects, groups and events in town are represented in the group. People in the community look to individuals in the group for community leadership and to the full group for community action.

On Target

When the Fort Garland Revitalization Committee first convened, they established goals to address community needs. The first

was to build consensus among different groups in the community. They especially wanted to attract teens and engage them in community activities. Group members also wanted to investigate the possibility of incorporating their town, a lingering local issue that had never really been researched.

Lights, Camera, Action

To determine the feasibility of incorporating as a municipality, the group researched costs for purchasing needed equipment and providing basic services that Costilla County now provides for the community. Although group members determined that incorporation may not be feasible (considering the average income of citizens in the town) the project turned out to be enlightening for the group.

At first, some people in the community were threatened by the incorporation study, thinking that the group was proceeding with action to incorporate. As time went on and group members discussed the project with other people, fears were allayed and the community began to trust in the process and the group. With trust established, the group has had wide community support on other projects.

Producing a Passion Play in March 1991 started out as a fund-raiser and turned into a tremendous community-building event. Written and produced by the group, the play served as a unique service to the community. Thirty-three people played 55 roles, bringing together people from several local communities and diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. Local people designed and made all of the costumes and the scenery. Because of start-up cost, the group did not make a lot of profit this year, but with this outlay behind them, they plan to profit in the future from what will be an annual event.

One group member summarized the most valuable aspect of this unique and challenging project: "The great thing about this project is that we discovered people's talents and people discovered their own talents. People came out for this in so many wonderful ways."

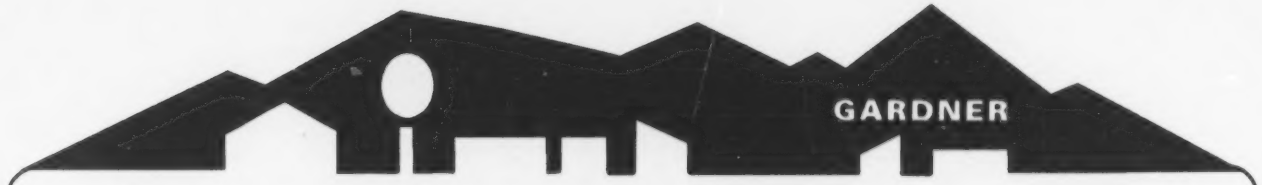
The group's on-going town beautification project also has experienced tremendous success. Members helped put in new streetlights donated by Public Service Co.; planters, trees, and perennial flowers on the main street; and tables, sprinklers, and new sod in the town park. County employees and equipment were used to help install these improvements.

The revitalization committee also spearheaded development of a college scholarship fund for local youth. One woman in the group started the fund with a letter-writing campaign.

All of these projects relied solely on local support. The group is proud of its achievements using local community resources.

Future Plans

Since the committee determined that finances will delay town incorporation several years, members have begun to consider incorporating their revitalization group. This will establish a more official body of leadership in town and an organization to raise funds. Future projects include continuation of town beautification; curb, gutter and sidewalk installation; and moving a port of entry weigh station declared a safety hazard.



"Committee members planned projects to identify interest groups in the community, develop a newsletter, sponsor community social gatherings, research ways to establish a funding base, and fund and operate a teen center."

Gardner	
1990 Population	575
Children, 0-4 Years	39
Youth, 5-17 Years	138
Seniors, 65+ Years	65
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-2.0%
Peak Census (Year)	N. A.
Year of Incorporation	Non Inc.
County	Huerfano
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$10,977

One Voice

Because Gardner is an unincorporated area with no official town government a citizen applied for involvement with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project. Twelve people expressed initial interest in becoming members of the Gardner Rural Revitalization Committee, and five of those attended a regional CRRP training workshop. A local workshop was held a month after the regional training, and again, five people were involved. During this session, group members developed an action plan outlining the group's focus. Approximately five more community people periodically were active throughout the year. Community representation included a homemaker, church layleaders, farmers, a teacher and a bookkeeper.

Gathering Strength

With no town government to sponsor the efforts of the Gardner Rural Revitalization Committee, the group used the existing but inactive Gardner Economic Development Association--a non-profit organization--to secure and manage projects for funding. By encouraging more local citizen participation, the group became an informal steering committee for the entire community. The group also expanded its influence by opening lines of communication with Huerfano County Commissioners. The group's leadership development resulted in one member's election to the County Planning and Zoning Commission.

The full committee met monthly. Typically, individuals pursued projects on their own with the guidance and support of the whole group.

One Town's Vision

The Gardner Revitalization Committee established several overall goals. The group wanted to address community dynamics that hampered economic and community development efforts. Most importantly, the committee wanted to get people involved in local improvement efforts and encourage citizens to care about their community. Committee members considered strained relations between anglo and hispanic people in the community as one challenge and wanted to help the community address this issue. The committee also wanted to

help improve Gardner's image, especially in the eyes of the county commissioners. Committee members also recognized that, without a taxing authority in the community, they would need to investigate options to establish a vehicle to raise money for revitalization projects.

Committee members planned projects to identify interest groups in the community, develop a newsletter, sponsor community social gatherings, research ways to establish a funding base, and fund and operate a teen center.

Teamwork

Although a small group, the Gardner Revitalization Committee has an impressive number of accomplishments to its credit. The group conducted a household community survey, identifying some special interest groups within the community, along with ideas for activities and change. Recognizing the need for a communication medium, the group developed and distributed a monthly newsletter, encouraging community wide input. Group members took turns gathering stories and editing the newsletter each month.

The committee started a branch of the county library, and a summer youth program with recreational, cultural and educational events. Both occupy an existing community center.

Committee members traveled to educational events and took valuable insights back to their community. An economic development workshop yielded ideas about value-added agricultural projects, job development, water resource development and small business development. Another resource provided information on cottage industry and recyling.

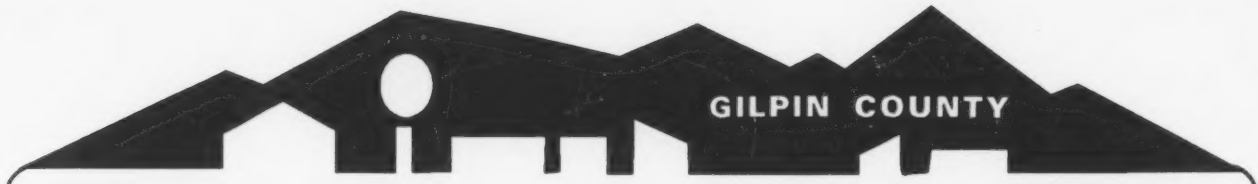
Town beautification projects included improving the local rodeo grounds using Colorado lottery funds, and planting trees on the community center grounds.

By hosting community potlucks and social events, the committee encouraged people to get to know and trust each other, to learn about the group's purpose and activities, and to encourage others to become involved. Thirty-five to 40 people attended each of these events. The group invited county commissioners to the events to show that pride in the community was growing, and to attract outside interest in the community.

Following one of these community meetings, and acting on the interests voiced by the community, the committee decided to research the possibility of establishing a Gardner Special District as a way to raise tax monies and manage community improvements. After researching the prospect, the group decided that the community would not pass such a measure; therefore, the group committed to re-activating the Gardner Economic Development Association and planned to use its not-for-profit status to encourage donations.

Ties to the Future

The Gardner Rural Revitalization Committee no longer is active, but community improvement efforts continue. Forums for community discussion, which the committee sponsored through town potlucks, continue through the efforts of a county commissioner who holds monthly meetings with the community. The community and the county developed strong ties that undoubtedly will help stimulate future community and economic development efforts in Gardner.



"...the community's attention was diverted by the onset of limited-stakes gambling and the need to effectively respond to the issues it presented."

Gilpin County	
1990 Population	3,070
Children, 0-4 Years	191
Youth, 5-17 Years	544
Seniors, 65+ Years	220
% Pop. Change 1980-90	25.8%
Peak Census (Year)	6,690 (1900)
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,796

Getting Started

Gilpin County citizens learned of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) through announcements in Denver newspapers. They decided to apply for participation in the project, expecting to establish businesses or stimulate tourism.

As a first-year community, Gilpin County (Black Hawk and Central City) was selected to pursue its community development and revitalization needs and to provide opportunity for community cooperation and teamwork. After acceptance into CRRP, Black Hawk and Central City became two of three towns in Colorado approved for limited stakes gambling. This event significantly impacted the community, creating several development issues and challenges not perceived during their CRRP application.

To get started, interested citizens in the community formed a six-person team.

Team Development

Following its initial organization, the Gilpin County Revitalization Coalition expanded to 16 members. Representation included a county commissioner, Central City town alderman, Black Hawk town alderman and city clerk and treasurer, former school board president and local business operator, editor of the Weekly Register-Call newspaper, secretary/treasurer of the North Clear Creek Association and Gilpin Historical Society member, and a Gilpin County real estate broker and historical society member.

The team soon divided into five sub-committees: water rights; city assets and liabilities; tourism; increased growth, recreation and leisure; and mining and industry. These sub-teams formed to:

* evaluate water rights owned by Gilpin County, Black Hawk and Central City;
* develop a brochure to increase general knowledge about county and city assets and liabilities;
* assess tourism patterns and numbers;
* evaluate existing and needed growth, recreation and leisure activities;
* investigate and evaluate mining industry potential.

The full team held a meeting monthly, and sub-teams met together on a weekly or monthly basis as needed. Personal contacts by telephone enhanced citizen participation.

Team Goals

The team identified several revitalization goals. One high priority targeted cooperative working relationships with the Forest Service so as to develop better walking and mountain bike trails for local citizens and tourists. Another goal was to establish an art gallery in Black Hawk. A third goal involved recruiting small businesses to locate in Gilpin County.

Accomplishing those goals became difficult when the community's attention was diverted by the onset of limited-stakes gambling and the need to effectively respond to the issues it presented. However, the Gilpin County Revitalization Coalition continued to work while meeting the challenges of starting up gambling in the community.

Team Projects

The trails project has been the primary revitalization activity. While the project has not been completed, the team has made progress in establishing working relationships with the U.S. Forest Service and Black Hawk and Central City. While the coalition judges the overall impact of the project on the community as less than optimal, it remains an important need.

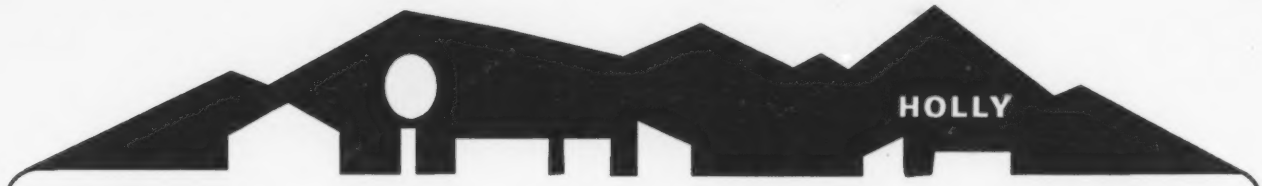
A significant result of the coalition's project work is that people from both cities and from the rest of the county came together and worked cooperatively to achieve a common goal. While project activity now is in hiatus due to the advent of the gambling operation, a strong initiative remains to accomplish more in community development and revitalization.

Future Directions

Coalition members have not lost their desire to achieve the initial goals established by the team. Theirs is a vision that encompasses the completion of the trails project and city or county parks, so that improved recreational opportunities exist, especially for Gilpin County families with children.

County residents and coalition members expect the chamber of commerce and the Gilpin County Revitalization Coalition to carry this vision forward. Limited-stakes gambling has recently demanded the time and attention of many people. Once that activity no longer requires such "undivided attention," the coalition again will focus attention on development goals for the county and its two major towns.

" A significant result of the coalition's project work is that people from both cities and from the rest of the county came together and worked cooperatively to achieve a common goal."



GRIT Gets Going

After hearing about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP), a committee formed in Holly to prepare an application to the project. Under the leadership of two city council members, the committee became known as the Greater Rural Improvement Team (GRIT). About 80 individuals initially were involved in the Holly improvement activities. Broadly representative of the many interests in the community, the committee included those from the adjacent farming area, town business, youth, churches, professions and political-governmental elements.

Holly	
1990 Population	877
Children, 0-4 Years	73
Youth, 5-17 Years	164
Seniors, 65+ Years	198
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-9.5%
Peak Census (Year)	1,236 (1950)
Year of Incorporation	1903
County	Prowers
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,439

Team Building

In the beginning, the community was excited about local improvement prospects. GRIT enjoyed considerable recognition and credibility for its work, and attracted numerous participants. The team networked with the universities and the state agency sponsoring CRRP, and with the Southern Colorado Economic Development Council and Lamar Community College, located nearby. Later, it became clear that there was a mismatch of expectations. Local desires and CRRP services and intents were discussed, but the project's leadership training was disappointing to community leaders who already felt competent in their leadership abilities. Also, local expectations for economic development assistance and access to capital proved more than CRRP could deliver.

Setting Goals

GRIT had two sets of goals. The first involved economic development, identification and mobilization of capital sources to conduct local improvement activities. The second involved strengthening citizen pride and enhancing the community's appearance.

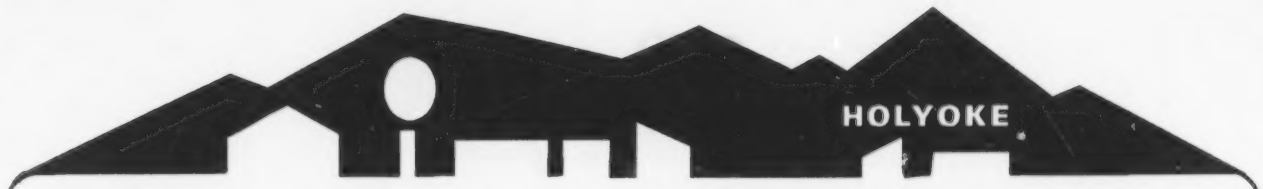
GRIT Projects

GRIT members report that they initiated three projects. A Christmas mailing aimed at strengthening community pride and informed local citizens about GRIT activities and aspirations. Another targeted economic development and supported a Holly agribusiness. At GRIT's request, CRRP arranged for university personnel to provide animal nutrition technical assistance for that local employer, one of the largest in the area. The third project also was related to economic development but has not yet been completed. One of Holly's major attractions is Gateway Horse Racing Track. Of major appeal to travelers and other visitors, the track is a significant source of income. GRIT members identified a need for improved restroom facilities at the track, and CRRP arranged for archi-

tectural designs developed by university students. While GRIT members appreciated the effort, they judged the students' designs too costly to implement and so have not pursued construction.

What More?

With inconsistencies between community and CRRP expectations, GRIT discontinued functioning as part of the project. However, a strong Holly Pride Committee emerged and has experienced considerable success by reopening and operating the local movie theater. A downtown beautification program also has been initiated. The community has successfully accessed outside financial assistance to fund both projects. Thus, the community continues to pursue its revitalization goals.



"Through broad participation of our citizens, Holyoke will be a community united together for Pride and Progress."

Holyoke	
1990 Population	1,931
Children, 0-4 Years	133
Youth, 5-17 Years	368
Seniors, 65+ Years	398
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-7.7%
Peak Census (Year)	2,093 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1888
County	Phillips
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$17,629

Teaming Up

Holyoke became a third-year community of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) through the efforts of the school district superintendent, a citizen group interested in revitalizing the local movie theater and the city council. The resulting Holyoke Revitalization group initially consisted of 35 people, representing a broad community spectrum. Ten months into the project, 20-25 individuals remained active. From the onset, Holyoke Revitalization defined its boundary to take in all of the Holyoke School District. Two-thirds of the community's families reside within town limits, one-third, in the surrounding agricultural areas.

Pulling Together

Early in the team-development process, Holyoke's group realized that their greatest community resource or asset existed in the many outstanding individuals living within the community. From the beginning of their CRRP involvement, revitalization group members were committed to making their community better. Under the guidance of CRRP core staff, the Holyoke group identified and prioritized three projects to work on, forming three task forces of approximately five people to work on each project. Initial projects were community assessment, community welcome signs, and a community bike/walking path. Later, two additional task forces formed, one to refine a vision statement for the community and a second to implement means for effective community planning, coordination and cooperation.

Setting Sights

The long-term goals for Holyoke Revitalization relate to economic development and overall community well-being. The short-term goals are to foster interest and implement action that leads to fulfilling and sustaining long-term goals.

Community assessment results show that residents have a tremendous amount of community pride, but were not working together in a unified effort for community progress. This was interesting, because Holyoke has long been known to local residents as "the community of pride and progress". Holyoke Revitalization hopes to provide the needed catalyst and energy for a safe and easy flow of communication, cooperation and coordination among various segments of the

community.

This unified effort is exemplified in the vision statement the community adopted in July 1991: "Through broad participation of our citizens, Holyoke will be a community united together for Pride and Progress. A safe, healthy, pleasant and sustainable environment will be provided where each citizen can develop his or her potential. Holyoke will be a diversified and economically stable rural community committed to shaping its own future, developing leadership in people of all ages, and serving the interests, needs and values of this and future generations."

Pride and Progress

The community assessment task force organized, implemented and completed their project first. They designed a comprehensive survey that went to every household. With help from CRRP, the group analyzed and reported survey results in an 82-page document. The group shared the results with various boards and elected officials within the community. The local newspaper published the survey results in a series of three articles. The community assessment task force's positive actions also served as a model for those working on other projects.

The signage team developed four "Welcome to Holyoke" signs with cooperation from the city council and local citizens, and with technical assistance from CRRP. The signs' installation concluded with a formal unveiling ceremony and newspaper coverage commemorating their completion.

CRRP also provided additional technical assistance for design of a community bicycle/ walking path. The path project grew into a multi-year undertaking. Currently, the path task force is reorganizing to tackle this project in several smaller steps over time.

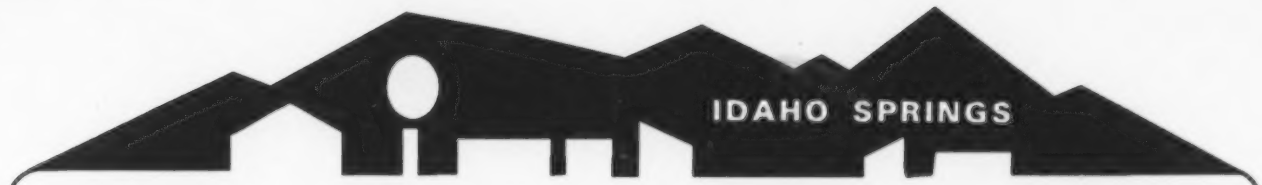
Holyoke Revitalization put a lot of time and energy into developing a community vision statement. Members wanted it to be meaningful, something that the entire community would agree with and take ownership in, and that would guide revitalization efforts. Vision task force members shared the vision statement process with many boards and organizations within the community to gain local support.

The community celebrated completion of the vision statement in several ways. The group launched a "Catch the Vision" campaign. July became "Vision Month," which culminated in a booth at the county fair, where people were encouraged to discuss the vision statement and to participate in revitalizing the community. Finally, a large pen-scrolled parchment paper copy of the vision statement was signed by community members and presented to the mayor in a special ceremony celebrating the Holyoke community's acceptance of the vision statement.

The task force on effective means to bring together the various leaders in the community developed a day-long workshop entitled Vision 2000. The workshop focused on discussing the community's future, setting common goals, and coordinating efforts within the community for its well-being. This task force continues to work on ways to encourage communication, cooperation and coordination among various segments of the community.

A Look Ahead

Holyoke Revitalization continues to take on projects of its own, and encourage other community organizations and leaders to participate in a coordinated revitalization effort. To establish a more permanent and official purpose, the group may seek to incorporate. Most importantly, Holyoke Revitalization hopes to be the driving force behind Holyoke's Pride and Progress for years to come.



"With the amount of influence and trust KCAT has earned, local decision-making has become more open and representative."

Idaho Springs	
1990 Population	1,834
Children, 0-4 Years	126
Youth, 5-17 Years	405
Seniors, 65+ Years	184
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-11.7%
Peak Census (Year)	2,502 (1900)
Year of Incorporation	1878
County	Clear Creek
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$16,379

Joining Forces

When the city administrator applied for participation in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP), an improvement group was already active in Idaho Springs. After the town was accepted into the project, the improvement group joined forces with CRRP, and the administrator approached others in the community she thought would be effective team members. The Kellogg Community Activation Team (KCAT) initially had 20 members, including the mayor, the city administrator, the recreation district director, school district administrators, members of the historical society, business people, high school students, a county planner, members of the tourism board and members of local service organizations.

Finding a Niche

KCAT membership has fluctuated somewhat, but the group remains stable and very effective. Task-oriented committees form as needed, with direction provided by the whole group. KCAT meets twice a month.

Town improvements were underway when the group first organized, mostly in response to a local mine closure and associated economic downturn. CRRP fit well into the kinds of activity people were doing already, and provided the group with additional training and resources to be more effective.

After attending CRRP leadership training, KCAT members worked through a process to determine the group's identity. They decided that certain projects and issues demanded their action. After these projects are accomplished, the group plans once again to act as a community forum.

Members feel the most valuable function of KCAT is as a network promoting communication and coordination among local organizations and community wide improvement efforts. With no community chamber of commerce, KCAT members feel the climate is nearly ripe for such an organization. KCAT may be just the group to charter one.

Initially, skepticism impeded the group's progress. As one member said, "People were skeptical at first...they didn't realize what they were going to get." Now the group doesn't have to recruit members--interested people volunteer. With the amount of influence and trust KCAT has earned, local decision-making has become more open and representative.

A Team Takes Aim

KCAT's initial goal targeted community lethargy. The group wanted citizens to have reason to be proud of their community. After developing a shared vision within KCAT, the group wanted to broadcast it widely, involving many others in community-building and local improvement. The team saw this effort as a critical first step before economic development could be tackled.

The team identified several specific projects that needed their attention. These included study and negotiation with state and federal officials over a plan to widen Interstate 70, developing a citizens' park, and improving the town's visual image.

Off and Running

Outside pressure forced KCAT to confront its largest, most complex issue first. In the process, the team coalesced and reached out to help the county develop a unified effort. Highway department plans to widen Interstate 70 promise far-reaching effects. Recognizing this fact, KCAT sent representatives to a county wide task force. They sought local opinion, gained agreement within KCAT, and quickly informed their representatives of the outcomes they preferred as a result of highway expansion, and what KCAT expected from task-force meetings with highway department officials.

KCAT's involvement spurred the county wide task force's success. The highway department has begun to listen to residents' concerns and has halted the expansion until negotiations with the county and communities have reached "win-win" agreements.

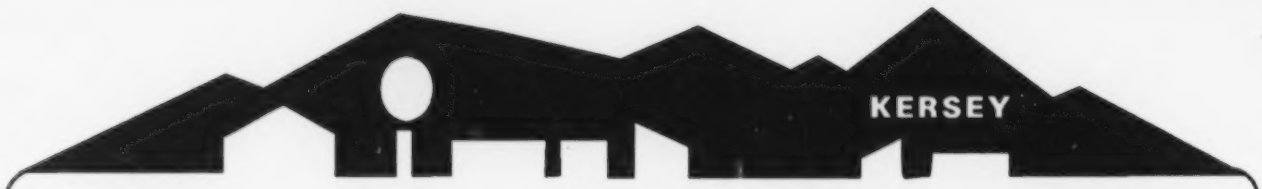
Capitalizing on opportunity has been a characteristic of KCAT's work. When an old bar burned down on a corner lot in town, the group quickly recommended to the town council that the town purchase the lot and put in a citizens' park. KCAT worked with the town in a major fund-raising drive, CRRP provided design assistance, and local team members implemented the project. The park was completed and dedicated in July 1991.

KCAT also spearheaded efforts to improve the town's visual image, focusing on town clean-up, downtown fix-up and major repairs to an old highway that runs through town. The town's application to Colorado Initiatives was accepted, and the program is funding technical assistance to implement local development projects.

KCAT also has nurtured more than a dozen other community projects, including discussion forums on local issues, developing plans for a community recreation center, and encouraging the neighboring town of Empire to become a CRRP town. Both community revitalization teams interacted often and coordinated grant applications to funding sources outside the county.

What's Next?

KCAT members look forward to continuing their efforts on numerous future issues they've identified. The most pressing of these issues is responding to limited-stakes gambling that has just begun in nearby Blackhawk and Central City, and the traffic and spillover that affects Idaho Springs. Members also want to address water rights and develop a bike trail system to link Idaho Springs with other nearby towns.



"K" Team members...believe that the slow process of establishing goals and selecting projects was worthwhile because of their effectiveness and credibility in the community now."

Kersey	
1990 Population	980
Children, 0-4 Years	79
Youth, 5-17 Years	237
Seniors, 65+ Years	103
% Pop. Change 1980-90	7.3%
Peak Census (Year)	980 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1908
County	Weld
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,230

The Beginning

The Kersey Town Board applied to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Once accepted, the town clerk recruited participants from the entire community through newspaper coverage, invitation letters and word-of-mouth. The Kersey Revitalization Team--the "K" Team--started with 12 members and has grown to 15; "K" Team members also recruit other community volunteers for special projects. The team reports that it tries to incorporate representation from every organization in Kersey on the committee, including Boy and Girl Scouts, the town board and town staff, downtown merchants, farmers, high school students, Lions, school district administrators, teachers, realtors, Grange, 4-H and two local employers--Monfort and National Hog Farms.

Developing a Team

"K" Team members agree that their group started slowly--they lacked direction for nearly a year. They also believe that the slow process of establishing goals and selecting projects was worthwhile because of their effectiveness and credibility in the community now. Committees organized around projects and issues the group targeted. These included developing a town library and museum, encouraging community arts and design, organizing adult education, economic development and fundraising. The group also elected an executive committee and sets up special project committees as needed.

The team is the volunteer core that serves the community and provides assistance to any group that wants it, including the town board. It provides a vehicle for communication among organizations and acts as liaison between community and outside groups. It has become the community think-tank, the group with foresight, the group that takes on large and small projects other groups have not. One "K" Team member observed, "We are the hub of the wheel that's made up of all the organizations that keep Kersey moving."

Setting Goals

The overall goals established by the group were to make Kersey more attractive to visitors and improve the quality of life for

current residents. To reach its goals, the group set several objectives: to develop a cooperative effort of beautification and improvement among downtown merchants; develop adult education options; take advantage of nearby highway widening; develop local recreation options and conduct a community needs assessment.

Getting to Work

First, the Colorado Highway Department was contacted to discuss changes in the highway on which Kersey is located. Local residents feared the new route would by-pass the town. According to Kersey's CRRP site manager, the group worked effectively with the highway department and brought people together for the sake of their community. The "K" Team used technical assistance provided through CRRP to have plans drawn to present to the highway department. Team members also stimulated a local letter-writing campaign.

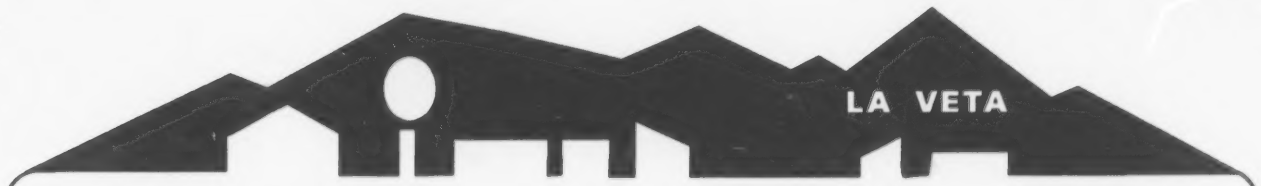
Team members consider downtown beautification efforts their most successful project. First, they had to get residents to see hope for downtown, where few improvements had been made in 30 years. Once the team developed a shared vision, they approached business owners with ideas for improvement and facade studies. Design assistance provided through CRRP included examples of external building improvements. So far, three merchants have spruced up their buildings according to facade study suggestions. With encouragement from local realtors, the "K" Team also seeks business options for vacant downtown buildings. Most importantly, they have been developing communication among business owners. The group sees this as the beginning of a business community.

The group also conducted a town survey; developed a plan for a town library, museum and adult learning center in a vacant local building; assisted the Kersey recreation committee with town events; sponsored a town garage sale; assisted with Kersey Beautification Days; and participated in economic development training conducted by Public Service Co.

Still Planning

Now that they have established their organization as a vital entity in the community, "K" Team members will continue their efforts to get more people involved with their team, especially local business people. The team also will join forces with the school district on yet another large endeavor. Together, they will develop plans for a recreation center, swimming pool and ballfields.

"According to Kersey's CRRP site manager, the group worked effectively with the highway department and brought people together for the sake of their community. "



"The whole town participated in a community-needs survey."

La Veta	
1990 Population	726
Children, 0-4 Years	43
Youth, 5-17 Years	141
Seniors, 65+ Years	165
% Pop. Change 1980-90	16.8%
Peak Census (Year)	897 (1940)
Year of Incorporation	1876
County	Huerfano
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$10,977

From the Start

La Veta's town board already was working on local improvement projects before involvement with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Community representatives decided to submit a CRRP participation application during the project's second year because of the project's available training and technical assistance. La Veta's revitalization committee consisted of 13 members.

The community's application stated a primary focus for revitalization: "The community is very concerned about the current economic situation and wants to find ways to stimulate the economy without making a major impact on the environment."

One from Many

Fourteen La Veta citizen volunteers participated in CRRP leadership training. As the committee sought to achieve equitable representation of the entire community, it has seen some turnover. Eventually, 13 volunteers--town board members and other citizens--emerged as the community's revitalization team. Most represent the economic middle class and young adult to middle age. Three of the original members remain active. The team meets twice monthly.

Three sub-teams formed to focus revitalization efforts on primary issues: signs for the town; beautifying the alley behind the town's main business area; and street drainage and paving. Sub-team meeting schedules were based on demand, varying from twice for one group to eight times for another.

The team generated community awareness about revitalization activities through newspaper articles and word-of-mouth. The whole town participated in a community-needs survey.

Five-Point Plan

Five primary goals emerged from team discussion and town board concerns: to erect welcome signs at each entrance to La Veta; to survey community needs; to create a walkway from the town park to the museum; to replace sidewalks, using one block of the main street as a demonstration; and to complete a drainage survey to plan appropriate street paving.

Work in Progress

Welcome signs were installed at two of

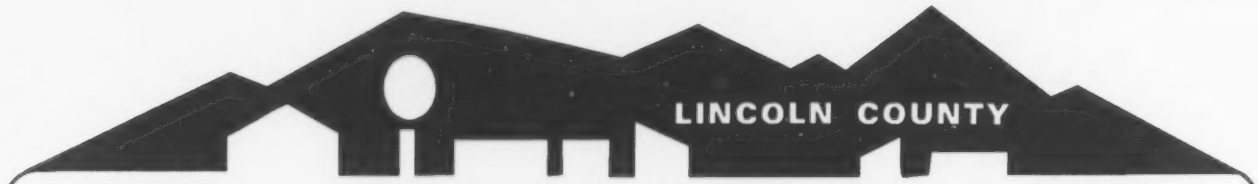
the three town entrances. Also, the completed community-needs survey yielded an excellent return.

Building the walkway was delayed until the drainage survey could be completed. The initial study proved not to be useful. Thus, a new survey involving the flow of the Cuchara River through town was initiated in summer 1991. New sidewalks were installed in front of the town library and museum.

Based on comments by residents, the signage project, two-thirds completed, has been the most successful to date. The town board and private donations provided financial support for the project.

Still to Come

Following a brief hiatus, the team and the sub-teams will meet again. Unfinished business includes completion of the signage project and further effort directed at the other four goals. Citizen interest in revitalization initiatives continues and the present team intends to do what it can to help achieve local goals.



"The Lincoln County Professional Recruitment Committee successfully recruited a medical doctor and a physician's assistant."

Lincoln County	
1990 Population	4,529
Children, 0-4 Years	345
Youth, 5-17 Years	848
Seniors, 65+ Years	882
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-2.9%
Peak Census (Year)	8,273 (1920)
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$18,487

Calling All Towns

In the fall of 1988, approximately 10 people from Limon, along with several other communities' teams, attended a regional training seminar for the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). After much discussion, members of the Limon group decided to expand involvement with CRRP into a county wide effort.

By summer of 1989, the Limon team invited Arriba, Genoa, Hugo and Karval. Representatives from these towns formed the Lincoln County Revitalization Committee, and CRRP offered another county wide leadership training session.

Branching Out

The Lincoln County Revitalization Committee experienced dramatic challenge and change. Initially, the group met monthly with task forces organized around several issues and projects identified by the group. Some task forces spun off and became separate committees, carrying out much of what they learned in CRRP training.

The revitalization committee slowly dissolved, as people became more and more committed to special interest issues and projects. Yet, the basic community development principles and action lived on in other groups.

One member of the group believes the training received through CRRP is the most valuable aspect of the project. "The training gave us a good basis to do what we do, whether it be in our own arena or any of the groups we've been involved with," she stated.

Blueprint for Success

The Lincoln County Revitalization Committee identified specific needs of the five communities represented on the committee and targeted their energy toward meeting these needs. The group focused on recruitment of health care professionals, development of recreation facilities and integrating into their communities people associated with a new prison facility recently built a few miles outside Limon.

Task Forces and a Tornado

Addressing a shortage of medical personnel serving the area, the Lincoln County Revitalization Committee formed a task force that became a spin-off committee. The Lincoln

County Professional Recruitment Committee successfully recruited a medical doctor and a physician's assistant.

A local prison integration task force worked with prison personnel and community members on several issues surrounding the new facility. Most importantly, the task force opened a channel of communication between communities and prison officials.

Members of this group educated themselves on challenges that towns face when correctional facilities locate nearby, and then worked to educate their respective communities. They alerted local officials to the issue of housing shortages, which must be addressed as the facility fills and brings more staff families to the area. They also raised the communities' awareness regarding hospitality toward inmates' relatives and friends visiting or staying in the area.

Then in June 1990, a disastrous tornado struck Limon, destroying much of the downtown district. The tornado tested community strength. A Tornado Action Team, with many representatives from the revitalization committee, quickly formed. "Limon Recovery" also employed a director with revitalization committee experience.

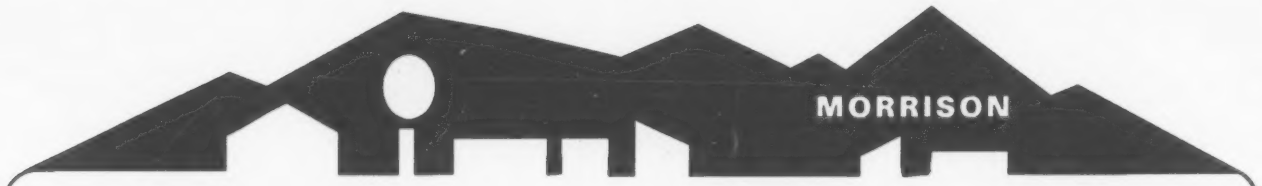
Tornado Action Team members say that their CRRP experience helped them meet the crisis. What they learned about community development processes was put to practice in the emergency. Local, county and state resources were mobilized and, within a year, businesses relocated and rebuilt. A massive downtown renewal was completed. Staff from a small-business development center are writing a "crisis response" book based on the Limon experience.

The story does not end there. The success of this cooperative effort in the wake of the disaster has strengthened alliances and citizens' resolve, county wide. More still must be done, and the Development Association of Lincoln County has formed to see that progress continues.

Planning Ahead

After successfully rebuilding a whole town, people who have been involved in various Lincoln County revitalization efforts look forward to continued momentum. Members of the Development Association of Lincoln County now are applying their energies to economic development and services throughout the county. Future goals include development of a network and resources to assist businesses. This network will help with business expansion; expediting new business location; educating business owners and staff about proposal writing, Workmen's Compensation, and business plan writing; and developing a referral list for employers or individuals interested in starting or expanding businesses.

The group also would like the county to consider creating and funding a new professional position. This position would coordinate and oversee a county wide human services committee, as well as a county advisory committee for economic development. As a resource broker, the person also would help establish and provide staff support to action groups in each of the five Lincoln County communities.



Getting Together

The Morrison Action Committee's (MAC) involvement with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) began when the town clerk applied for assistance in summer 1989. Since then, MAC has enjoyed steady participation from about 30 members. MAC membership includes town staff and elected officials, retail business owners, nursing facility staff, realtors, architects, school administrators, artists, a photographer, other professionals and area residents.

Morrison	
1990 Population	465
Children, 0-4 Years	14
Youth, 5-17 Years	43
Seniors, 65+ Years	194
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-2.7%
Peak Census (Year)	478 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1906
County	Jefferson
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$19,891

Building a Team

MAC members believe CRRP leadership training gave them valuable skills and information needed to build a vital team to work within the community. The committee's size and inclusive nature also helped its success. MAC invites those within and outside of the community to participate. They encourage people to get involved at many different levels, from work on specific projects to ongoing committee membership. Committee volunteers range in age from 4 to 86 years.

MAC meets monthly, or as often as upcoming events require. The group sticks to its agenda and limits each meeting to two hours. Sub-committees handle each group-sponsored event, each with its own chairperson. A few activities required only one person's organizational skills and energy.

MAC has evolved into a group that acts partly as a town board study group. The board refers potential projects and issues to MAC for members to determine feasibility and procedure for action. MAC works closely with the town board, and has several board members on the committee, but tries to remain separate from local government. Community remains the focus, with political interests kept to a minimum.

Aiming for Action

Although MAC established specific project goals at the beginning of its CRRP involvement, it always has operated under a broad goal of improvement and town promotion rather than a specific project orientation. MAC's vision statement says, "We are residents and business owners who are concerned about our community and want to create and maintain an attractive, fun, vibrant place to visit and live." This approach helps avoid alienating specific project opponents and keeps the group from becoming a voice for special interests.

MAC's original goals included funding and building a public restroom, an information/promotion kiosk and upgraded street lighting. The group realized that these early, visible projects would establish a precedent. MAC has

focused its energy on small, feasible projects that promise quick and apparent results. While MAC works slowly on its original goals, their portfolio of local successes and credibility grows.

A Hardworking Team

Capitalizing on local opportunities and resources contributed to MAC's successes. The group developed an alliance with Bear Creek Nursing Center, a 175-resident facility in Morrison. This partnership attracted additional committee leadership from the nursing center staff and provided opportunities for activities with the center's residents. The center often hosts MAC meetings in its conference room.

MAC has sponsored numerous town events. Most required only local resources, mainly volunteer time and talent. For town beautification, volunteers worked on conversion and annual maintenance of a street into a greenbelt; they promoted adopting the red petunia as town flower and encouraged merchants and residents to plant petunias liberally; and they hung dinosaur banners on main street to advertise Morrison's proximity to Dinosaur Ridge, site of dinosaur fossils and footprints.

MAC initiated a host of seasonal events. At Halloween, they held a scarecrow contest and trick or treat "Safe Street" at the Bear Creek Nursing Center for children and nursing center residents. For Christmas, MAC held a town potluck, hayrides, carolling, a bonfire, and a town tree lighting. MAC also coordinated a local theater company's work with children on a theater production. Along with nursing center residents, MAC set up the Ho Ho Hotline for children to call and leave messages for Santa Claus. And one committee member offers her cider press for local people to process their own apples on an annual Cider Press Day.

MAC also adopted part of Bear Creek to clean up, held a townwide garage sale in conjunction with an annual antique sale, and organized a town health fair at the nursing center. The committee published an "Always Buy Morrison" coupon booklet with a business directory and discount coupons. MAC also helps out at the annual Dino Days and the Morrison Buffalo Barbecue.

MAC's greatest accomplishment is not one single project, but rather, the increase in widespread involvement and a vibrant community spirit.

On and On

MAC plans to continue meeting well into the future. Committee members recognize that their project pace requires enormous volunteer commitment. They are considering incorporating their group and hiring a full-time coordinator to administer programs and organize volunteers. They also hope to attract a continuing stream of volunteers to avoid overburdening present members.

The group developed an alliance with Bear Creek Nursing Center, a 175-resident facility in Morrison.

89

is Fun program, town support and Energy Impact Funds. WERE members also hope this new recreation area will attract tourists and provide a possible local irrigation source.

The group targeted an old uranium mill three miles west of Naturita as a future site for a golf course and other potential recreational activities. The site now is involved in an Environmental Protection Agency clean-up. WERE members expect to develop a master plan for the site, and hope to be involved in the clean-up process, so the area will be left in a suitable condition for recreational development.

WERE members also worked on the application for Scenic and Historic Byway status through the State Highway Department, for the highway that runs through Naturita. The group wrote a history of the area, solicited letters of support, took photographs of the area and assisted with a presentation to the highway department.

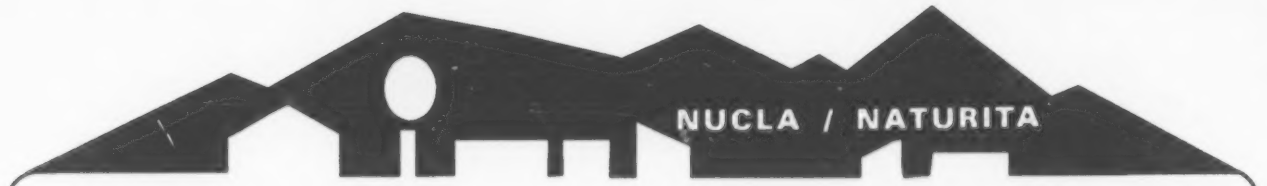
The byway committee joined forces with groups in other towns as far as Grand Junction--110 miles away--to make a stronger presentation to the highway department. Their efforts were rewarded, and the Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway was dedicated the last weekend in September 1991.

Down the Road

WERE members plan to continue meeting. They will function as they have in the past, serving as a clearinghouse and thinktank for area improvements, and networking with project groups. Their future efforts will focus on developing local jobs and housing options.

"WERE members consider the household survey in the communities their most successful and important project during their year in CRRP."

Nucla	
1990 Population	656
Children, 0-4 Years	41
Youth, 5-17 Years	148
Seniors, 65+ Years	99
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-36.1%
Peak Census (Year)	1,027 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1915
County	Montrose
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,150



Joining Forces

Calling themselves the West End Revitalization Effort (WERE) people from both Nucla and Naturita joined forces when a Nucla town board member applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). After initiating the project, he recruited people to attend leadership training workshops. An open invitation to both communities' residents in the local newspaper attracted about 15 people when the group first began. The group still meets monthly, and eight to 10 people attend regularly. Representation from both towns included business owners, town board members and county commissioners, realtors, retirees and chamber of commerce members. Three chairpersons take turns facilitating meetings.

Building a Team

From its beginning, WERE provided a forum to generate ideas those originating from other local organizations and the two towns' governments. WERE is aware of the local governments' endeavors and communicates with them, but functions independently. The group accomplished a few projects on its own but is most effective when it stimulates other community groups, many of which are represented on WERE, to act on ideas.

Work and Play

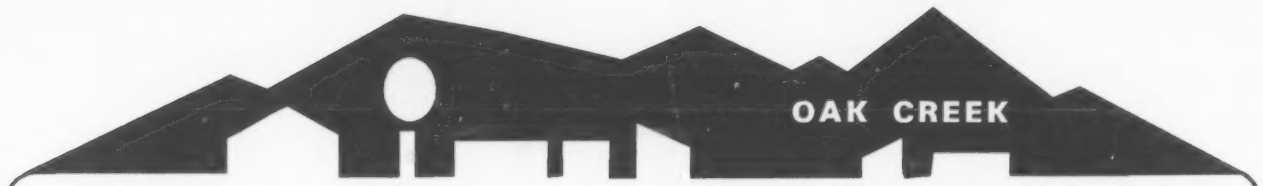
WERE has two primary goals. The first, a result of uranium mine closures in the area, is to provide jobs for young people so they can stay in the area. The second, which surfaced with community survey results, is to develop recreational options for residents in the two communities.

Naturita	
1990 Population	434
Children, 0-4 Years	30
Youth, 5-17 Years	76
Seniors, 65+ Years	76
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-47.0%
Peak Census (Year)	979 (1960)
Year of Incorporation	1951
County	Montrose
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,150

Playing to Win

The West End Revitalization Effort contributed to a long list of projects. WERE members consider the household survey in the communities their most successful and important project during their year in CRRP. The group achieved a 92-percent return rate for the survey. They credit this success to their house-to-house delivery and pick-up method, along with guaranteed anonymity for respondents. The group and the communities used survey results many times to guide their decisions, and incorporated the results in more than 100 funding proposals.

Survey results indicated a strong desire for recreational options in the two communities. These results gave impetus to a couple of large projects now underway with WERE members' encouragement. A dry reservoir site in Nucla will become a swimming and fishing lake, with funding from the Division of Wildlife Fishing



Kickoff

Upon approval of the Oak Creek Town Board, the town staff applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Town staff then invited all interested citizens to participate. The invitation appeared in a monthly newsletter sent out with utility bills. The Oak Creek Rural Revitalization Committee began with about 15 people and soon had a core of eight to 10 people who regularly attended meetings. Committee representation included town board members and staff, senior citizens, youth and some school district employees.

Oak Creek	
1990 Population	673
Children, 0-4 Years	54
Youth, 5-17 Years	123
Seniors, 65+ Years	87
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-27.6%
Peak Census (Year)	1,769 (1940)
Year of Incorporation	1907
County	Routt
Colorado Location	North Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$19,412

Building Consensus

Revitalization committee development occurred in two stages. Because the town experienced difficulties in gaining agreement on revitalization efforts, consensus-building and leadership development had to be accomplished before specific projects could be targeted. Team members' hesitance to take on the role of committee facilitator inadvertently encouraged development of leadership skills among all members. The position of facilitator revolved; at each meeting, a facilitator was assigned for the next meeting. After serving as a member of the revitalization committee, one member of the group with no previous political experience was elected to the town board. Team members credit her involvement with CRRP as good preparation for service on the town board.

The second stage in team development was project development. Sanctioned by the town board, the committee became a project-oriented working arm of the board. It dealt with projects the town also was interested in pursuing. Members formed two sub-committees to address priority needs identified in the community survey they conducted. After its year with CRRP, Oak Creek was accepted into Colorado Initiatives (CI), a financial assistance program for technical support and implementation of local development projects.

Mapping Goals

The revitalization committee originally mapped out four goals:

1. assess citizen opinion about revitalization efforts;
2. gain local agreement and direction for revitalization;
3. build community spirit and unity;
4. positively promote the town.

To accomplish these goals, the committee first conducted a survey to gather citizen ideas and information. Armed with data from the survey, the committee established two action priorities--town beautification and developing community recreation options.

Pitching In

The revitalization committee identified several projects to address these priorities. Participation in the Colorado Statewide Paint-a-Thon made the town more attractive and got people with different interests and needs working together. The committee felt the Paint-a-Thon was an important step toward town unification.

Involvement with the Oak Creek Radical Road Race, a bicycle race sponsored by the Steamboat Springs Velo Club, yielded several positive outcomes. Community people helped organize the race, provided refreshments and enforced safety measures. In the process, they were exposed to a new recreational option for the community. The race also provided the opportunity to promote Oak Creek to racers from around the state.

The community survey stands as the most successful and useful project that the committee accomplished all year. The entire committee helped hand-deliver questionnaires and pick up responses the next day. With a response rate of 83 percent, the survey was a good gauge of community opinion. The results played an important part in preparing proposals and grant applications. Referred to frequently, the survey results also help keep the town board on track when making decisions about Oak Creek revitalization.

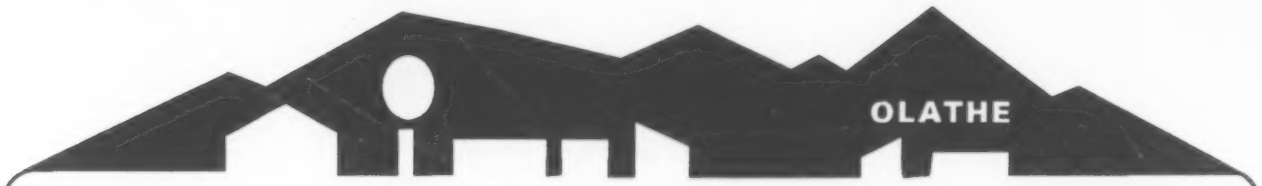
While involved in Colorado Initiatives, the revitalization committee took on several additional projects. For one project, they focused on Oak Creek, a stream that runs through town. Using technical assistance provided through CI, the group developed a master plan for a proposed trail system along the creek. The plan includes a wetlands area, fish and wildlife habitat pools, an R.V. park, and a new restroom and concession facility in Decker Park (completed in summer 1991). The park improvements have been a town goal for seven years, and the revitalization committee's energy made them a reality. Funding for the project came from the Gates and Boettcher Foundations, US WEST Communications, and individual and local business donations. Revitalization committee members credit CRRP for helping them develop the ability to attract local and outside funding.

Investigating revitalization options near their community, the committee researched possible market plans for the Stagecoach Reservoir State Recreation Area, five miles from Oak Creek. Following the arrival of a new ranger at the state reservoir, Oak Creek now is featured in Stagecoach Reservoir's state park brochures.

Onward and Upward

The Oak Creek Revitalization Committee is pleased with its accomplishments and has temporarily stopped meeting. But members anticipate future needs and circumstances that might entice them to reconvene. Two possible sources for economic change in Oak Creek are opening the community to limited-stakes gambling, and the development of nearby Catamount Ski Area. If either of these prospects occur, committee members foresee the need to re-activate and assist the community through processes of significant local change.

"Team members' hesitance to take on the role of committee facilitator inadvertently encouraged development of leadership skills among all members."



Early Recruiting

Olathe town staff applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Eight people from the community attended leadership training workshops, then opened participation to the community and the outlying agricultural area. Ten people formed the Olathe Area Revitalization Committee and remained active throughout the year and a half that the group officially met. Community representation included town board members, town staff, county commissioners and business owners.

Olathe	
1990 Population	1,263
Children, 0-4 Years	86
Youth, 5-17 Years	275
Seniors, 65+ Years	269
% Pop. Change 1980-90	.1%
Peak Census (Year)	1,263 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1907
County	Montrose
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,150

Leaders Emerge

To encourage greater participation, committee meetings followed an informal format with flexible meeting times to accommodate different schedules. Members took turns chairing the monthly meetings so that each one would have the opportunity to experience this leadership role. Partly because of the experience, some members went on to be elected to the town board.

An important part of the Olathe committee's process was maintaining its independence until members decided what project to attempt. To help decide on a project, the group invited local business owners' input. Business people then perceived the group and its efforts and agenda as separate from government.

Some committee members felt they were slow to set goals and focus on a project--they met a year before they agreed on one. However, taking their time and proceeding carefully brought them the support of the entire community and success in a major project.

Plan of Attack

The primary goal of the Olathe Revitalization Committee was to attract more people to town. Recognizing that this goal required full community support, the committee set another goal: to unite efforts between local government, businesses and citizens. More specific objectives included improving local communication, investigating economic development options and assisting existing businesses.

A Working Committee

The committee determined the need for a community newsletter and began to develop one. They learned that a local high school teacher had raised money for a desktop publishing system; her idea was to publish a school districtwide newsletter. The committee presented her with ideas for a community publication, including the schools. Two groups who were pursuing different avenues now work

together, publishing and distributing a community newsletter nine months annually.

The group's largest project, which required the entire community's support and participation, was improving Olathe's main street. The group recognized that the substandard road, curbs and gutters on the main street discouraged people from driving into town. The road had such a high center crown that in the winter, drivers trying to park would almost slide into downtown businesses and then get stuck.

The project plan included lowering the crown and repaving the road; replacing the main water line; replacing curbs, gutters and sidewalks; and building a pocket park on a vacant lot at the end of the improved area.

When the group approached businesses and landowners whose lots would be included and who would be taxed for the project, they met with enthusiasm. Business owners supported it because it was a revitalization committee effort. As one committee member stated, "This is one thing that the community has done as a community. No town board or county commission could have made this happen. It took a separate group without a pre-determined agenda."

Financing for the project came from State Energy Impact funds, a tax assessment bond, a general obligation water bond, a special improvement district, the county and the town.

The main street project was completed, except for the pocket park, in August 1990. The committee celebrated with a whole day of festivities. The street was closed to traffic during a ribbon-cutting, a parade, a street dance, a barbecue, games and a corn-eating contest.

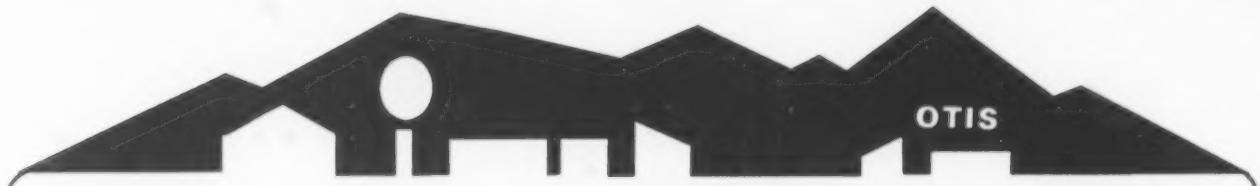
Although the group officially stopped meeting after the celebration, some members persevered with plans for the pocket park, which was completed in August 1991.

The committee considers the main street project an overwhelming success, not only because of the physical improvements but also because of the positive attitude fostered in the community. One member commented, "A natural consequence of our project is that business owners now take more pride in their places. They are continuing the effort by fixing and cleaning up their businesses."

Future Plans

Olathe Area Revitalization Committee members think it is time to get their committee going again to tackle other projects in the area. They want to attract some new members and start with leadership training again. With a large success to their credit--strong community support for the main street and pocket park projects--committee members feel their group will be the entity that helps Olathe grow.

"The group's largest project, which required the entire community's support and participation, was improving Olathe's main street."



"The largest project Otis tackled was the town's landfill problem...Otis must reduce its waste production rate by 25 percent and bring its current landfill into compliance, or the EPA will shut it down."

Otis	
1990 Population	451
Children, 0-4 Years	24
Youth, 5-17 Years	93
Seniors, 65+ Years	98
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-15.5%
Peak Census (Year)	568 (1960)
Year of Incorporation	1917
County	Washington
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$19,768

OAT Evolves

Before applying to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP), Otis had its own economic development group, the Otis Action Team (OAT). When the city council invited every citizen and business to support CRRP, 20 people responded, and CRRP and OAT agreed to merge. Participation now is steady at between 12 and 15 people.

Lunch and Strategy

Although they attended leadership training sessions which encouraged structured committees and meetings, OAT members discovered after several meetings that their team would be most effective if its operations reflected the town's informal nature. OAT continues to meet monthly, usually in a local church, over a potluck lunch. A loose agenda is set prior to meetings, which consist of open conversation to introduce and discuss ideas. OAT members also are determined to work by consensus, because they believe in full community support.

Community Boosters

OAT's overall goal is to maintain an umbrella organization that tackles projects no other local group is willing to take on. Prior to establishing OAT, Otis had no chamber of commerce to promote local businesses, nor did it have organizations to investigate and pursue economic development options. OAT hopes to fulfill these and other roles. Members want to establish a forum to funnel project ideas throughout the community; they want to stimulate and act on creativity in the community; they want to brainstorm and pass on some ideas for commmunity action; and they want to tackle projects themselves. As one OAT member expressed, "We want to be a booster group for the entire community."

Recycling is Job One

The largest project Otis tackled was the town's landfill problem. Under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency mandate, Otis must reduce its waste production rate by 25 percent and bring its current landfill into compliance, or the EPA will shut it down. The closure would result in high costs to haul the

town's waste to distant landfills. Given the alternative, OAT decided to investigate recycling options for the community.

Originally, the group hoped to establish a large recycling industry in Otis, to handle the town's waste problems and bring an economic boost to their community. Upon further investigation, the group discovered that transportation costs and lack of volume ruled out that possibility. Members then narrowed their focus to take care of only their community's recycling needs. First, they had to educate themselves about recycling, and then educate the community. To assist the group's efforts, nearby Morgan County received a grant from the Office of Energy Conservation for environmental clean-up purposes, and Otis received a portion of the grant.

Because OAT members devoted so much time and energy to research recycling, they realized they could become a regional resource for recycling information. Along these lines, in the fall of 1991, OAT sponsored a Recycling Fair, which included approximately 15 northeastern Colorado communities. The fair told the story of how OAT got its recycling project started, educated nearby communities and visitors, and encouraged the development of recycling programs in other towns. The fair included displays of what can and cannot be recycled and how to compost. Otis school children contributed their ideas. More than 200 people attended, and future plans include assembling a training team to share insights with other communities. OAT also is developing recycling educational programs for use in schools, because as one OAT member observed, "Recycling will really start in our schools, with our children."

Working with other nearby communities, OAT arranged for a truck to transport recyclable materials to serve Otis. Working with a local grocer, the team arranged for a grocery transporter to carry used plastic grocery bags and cardboard for recycling on his return trip.

Another project OAT pursued was to help raise funds and develop plans for the new tennis courts in Otis' roadside park. This project provides a recreational opportunity for community people and tourists alike.

And So On...

OAT members plan to continue their efforts indefinitely because the community needs their organizational skills. They see themselves as the group that will keep Otis vital in the future.

"Recycling will really start in our schools, with our children."

Forming a Committee

The mayor of Paonia initiated an application to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). The Paonia Revitalization Committee drew representatives from town board and staff, the chamber of commerce, local business people and retired people.

Finding an Identity

The Paonia Revitalization Committee got off to a somewhat slow start, learning to deal with mixed agendas and committee turnover. Town board member involvement proved to be both a help and a hindrance; as people with interests different from those of local government dropped out, the group got sidetracked on town board issues.

Although the revitalization committee disbanded after six months, interested members pursued goals and projects the committee had considered. To focus on tourism development, they decided to build public restrooms, a project that was discussed earlier. From then on, some members of the revitalization committee were involved with revitalization projects, and some projects accomplished were outgrowths of the group's efforts.

Team Hopes

With nearby mines closing and local fruit growers struggling, the Paonia Revitalization Committee formed to investigate ways to create jobs for local citizens. They investigated potential successful of cottage industries and ways to:increase tourism, establish cooperation among local fruit growers,

Paonia	
1990 Population	1,403
Children, 0-4 Years	92
Youth, 5-17 Years	271
Seniors, 65+ Years	367
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-1.5%
Peak Census (Year)	1,425 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1902
County	Delta
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,019

market existing businesses and attract more retirees to town.

Getting Busy

Revitalization committee members recognized that if they succeeded at attracting more tourists to town, existing public restrooms would be inadequate. Building a new restroom facility was the first project they targeted. The project eventually came to fruition through the efforts of the town board, some chamber of commerce members and some revitalization committee members. CRRP provided technical assistance to have plans drawn for the facility. Funding for the project was provided by Conservation Trust (lottery) funds. The facility, located in the town park, was completed in the summer of 1991.

Paonia's mayor and another active committee member also initiated a BMW motorcycle rally in the town park in summer 1989. Now an annual event, the rally continues to grow each year. This year, it brought 1,100

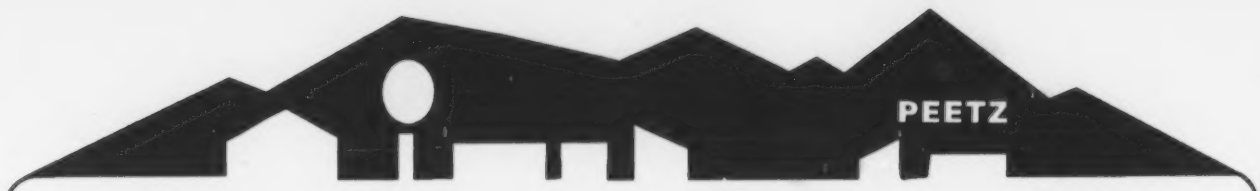
people to Paonia for a few days in July.

Other projects that involved revitalization committee members include supporting the annual Paonia Cherry Days celebration and applying for designation of Colorado State Highway 133, on which Paonia is located, as a Scenic and Historic Byway. The first application was not successful, but a second application has been submitted.

Looking Down the Road

Revitalization efforts in Paonia will continue on an informal basis and will involve interested citizens, the town board and the chamber of commerce. Projects being discussed include welcome signs, town entry improvement and increasing tourism. Residents also hope to develop a recreation district that brings Paonia and two nearby towns together to fund a swimming pool for the three communities.

"Now an annual event, the [BMW motorcycle] rally continues to grow...this year, it brought 1,100 people to Panonia..."



"...the committee became an extension of local government. Committee members feel that in a town their size, this combination is the most productive..."

Peetz	
1990 Population	179
Children, 0-4 Years	12
Youth, 5-17 Years	38
Seniors, 65+ Years	35
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-18.6%
Peak Census (Year)	232 (1950)
Year of Incorporation	1917
County	Logan
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,415

Calling the Roll

The Peetz mayor and town board applied to the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) and were instrumental in organizing a local revitalization group. The Peetz Revitalization Committee began with 20 members, including representatives from service organizations, church members and pastors, farmers, school board members, and members of the existing Community Action Group. High school students also provided suggestions and joined the efforts on some projects.

Close Collaboration

The Peetz Revitalization Committee had good representation from local officials and a strong working relationship with town government. As time went on, the committee became an extension of local government. Committee members feel that in a town their size, this combination is the most productive; the more collaboration they can achieve, the more success they experience. The committee met once a month and functioned as a whole for all projects.

Group members feel the town board always served the citizens well and truly spoke as the voice of the community. CRRP involvement provided the town board and the community more impetus for project-focused action and a re-emergence of town beautification efforts. Peetz citizens share town pride, and the revitalization committee celebrated and acted on that pride, something the town board could not do. CRRP's technical assistance helped get projects that were discussed for years off the ground.

The group received extensive local publicity and press coverage because of their efforts and projects. Word of their involvement also got around via the grapevine. This attention linked the group with the community, and group members felt a high level of community awareness and support for their activities.

One committee member assessed the most beneficial aspect of the group's involvement with CRRP: "The most important thing we got out of this was exposure--around the state, region and nation." Peetz was included in special-issue coverage of rural life in America by two large newspapers, one in Dallas, Texas, and another in Riverside, Calif.

Setting Goals

First, the revitalization committee assessed the community needs to determine which projects to tackle. After CRRP helped them complete a town survey, the group set project-oriented goals based on concerns citizens expressed.

Overall, the group wanted to improve the appearance of Peetz. They targeted three specific projects: main street beautification, refurbishing an old building to house the town hall, and upgrading the town's water system for improved fire protection.

Special Delivery

The Peetz Revitalization Committee experienced tremendous success with the town survey. Between 20 and 25 people helped deliver and collect surveys. They delivered questionnaires in the morning and collected them the same evening. The group publicized the project extensively beforehand through the local monthly paper and the public school bulletin. The survey included households in a 30-square-mile area around Peetz.

Committee members credit the survey project with organizing and motivating the group. They credit the results with providing further impetus and direction for their efforts.

Survey results expressed deep community pride among Peetz citizens. People in the area are proud of high-quality schools, their close-knit community and a superb environment for raising families. Reflecting this pride, respondents rated improving town appearance and fire protection as very important. The survey also was beneficial for the town board, because they use the results when applying for grants.

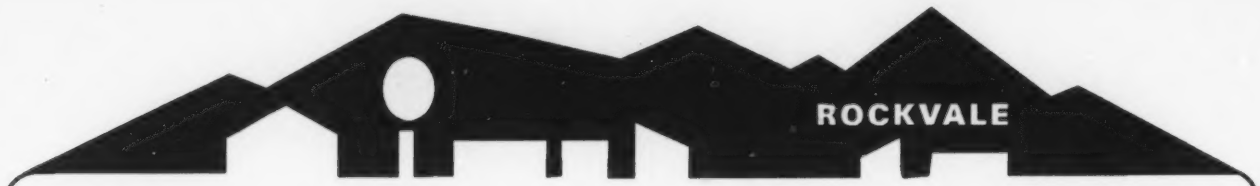
After the committee chose three projects on which to focus--main street beautification, store renovation to house the town hall, and improving the water delivery system for fire protection--they asked the town board to determine how to fund the projects.

The town board learned of state grant funds. The board held many special meetings to write a successful application for an Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Grant. The board received a grant of $50,000 for renovating the new town hall building and a loan of $10,000 for the water improvement project.

CRRP technical assistance provided design help for these two projects. The town board received bids. The committee also had a design done for the main street beautification project, but must raise more money before implementing those plans.

More to Come

The revitalization committee meets only as needed. Now the town board takes most of the action. People from the revitalization committee continue to work informally with the town board to accomplish projects and provide more ideas for town improvement. Future goals include maintaining the community's quality and showing people from outside the community the town's tremendous pride.



In the First Place

The Rockvale Town Board initiated participation in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). In the beginning, the action team (later identified as "Rockvale Uplift") involved eight volunteers. The group consisted of the mayor, the town clerk, and two board members (one of whom was also the circulation manager of the Canon City Daily Record). Other volunteers included a retired teacher, a local builder who is a retired military officer, a former town mayor and a certified water technician.

Rockvale	
1990 Population	321
Children, 0-4 Years	21
Youth, 5-17 Years	51
Seniors, 65+ Years	62
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-5.0%
Peak Census (Year)	1,413 (1910)
Year of Incorporation	1886
County	Fremont
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,157

Budding Leaders

While many of the action team's volunteers were town employees, other citizens also were initially well represented. Twelve persons participated in the CRRP leadership training in February 1990. At its peak of activity, the team totaled 25 volunteers.

Setting Targets

When CRRP became involved with Rockvale, the town's primary need was to improve a deteriorating water collection and distribution system. A second important need was street and road repair.

Initially, project goals included a coal town bicycle race; a coal town museum; a store; a reservoir to help alleviate periodic, severe summer water shortages and to provide for tourists' and townspeople's recreation; a town park; and a town-owned business, such as a greenhouse or a specialty truck farm. All of these depended on improved local water supply.

Focus on Water

The team developed and distributed a community needs survey with assistance from CRRP. One-hundred-ten surveys were circulated and citizens willingly provided information---87 percent of all questionnaires were completed.

Survey results showed the top priority was to resolve the problem of the antiquated water system. Of particular concern were the repetitive summer water shortages. Though a number of well-meaning persons volunteered to lay some new pipe, the town was later sued. Achieving a solution to the problem of a 100-year-old, manually installed water system remains a town need, and citizens have not been able to agree on a satisfactory solution to the problem.

Action Group Disbands

Though the "Rockvale Uplift" Team gained initial recognition and credibility in the town, the committee no longer meets or works on a formal basis.

Taking Off

A member of the Saguache Town Board applied for assistance from the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). She intended to encourage community members to get involved, work together, and capitalize on all the natural and cultural assets of their community. The town looks out on the beautiful Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east. Saguache is close to prime hunting grounds and fishing waters, and the climate is moderate, although the nearby mountains experience heavy annual snowfall. And a local summer museum contains the jail cell where alleged cannibal miner Alferd Packer once was held.

Saguache	
1990 Population	584
Children, 0-4 Years	40
Youth, 5-17 Years	97
Seniors, 65+ Years	123
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-11.0%
Peak Census (Year)	1,219 (1940)
Year of Incorporation	1878
County	Saguache
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$11,614

Building "Community"

Saguache's CRRP team story is one of building "community." Participating in the project helped people in Saguache realize the necessity--and the difficulty--of getting citizens to work together for community improvement and economic development. Progress has been halting, but group members recognize that CRRP gave the community a nudge toward tackling basic community-building that forms the foundation for the town's vitality.

Right on Target

Prior to its involvement with CRRP, the Town of Saguache concentrated its efforts on improving surface drainage and paving streets. The CRRP team continued these efforts, along with town clean-up, planting trees and landscaping the community. The group also hoped to address concerns expressed by Saguache citizens in a community survey and a leadership training session. Concerns included attracting more businesses and publicizing the town and area to tourists and visitors.

Getting to Work

The team conducted a community survey in cooperation with a high school teacher and class. A county representative on the regional tourism board developed a plan to create a visitors' center and promote Saguache as the "Northern Gateway to the San Luis Valley." Various individuals have begun planting trees, cleaning up cluttered areas along the highway, beautifying the town, and researching designs for welcome signs and directional signs to the museum, town hall and library.

Someday...

Through their efforts to build a revitalization group, people in Saguache developed a greater awareness of the assets their community and location offer. They also began building the foundation for a more comprehensive improvement program, with a larger base of community participation and cooperation.

"The San Luis Planning Commission meets the future confident that they have shaped a long agenda of meaningful local improvements for San Luis, Colorado's oldest community."

San Luis	
1990 Population	800
Children, 0-4 Years	71
Youth, 5-17 Years	175
Seniors, 65+ Years	123
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-5.0%
Peak Census (Year)	842 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1968
County	Costilla
Colorado Location	South Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$12,379

Genesis of a Team

The Costilla County Economic Development Council (EDC) already was active in San Luis for a couple of years before members learned of the technical assistance and leadership training available through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Thirteen people participated in CRRP leadership training, then spun off from the economic development council to become the San Luis Planning Commission. The local church, community, and town and county government all were represented.

Blending Old and New

The San Luis Planning Commission evolved from the original economic development group, but its members remained active in both groups. They didn't want to duplicate activities and services, so the planning commission decided to work primarily on a town master plan, with hopes of completing the plan in their 12-month enrollment with CRRP. By experiencing leadership training together, planning commission members developed an identity of their own, separate from the rest of the economic development council committees. At the same time, though, the planning commission drew upon the credibility and recognition already established by the economic development council. The planning commission functioned as an independent organization coordinating the master plan project on behalf of--and in conjunction with--local government.

Making Plans

The San Luis Planning Commission's one goal was to improve the community. As an outgrowth of that goal, they also found themselves aiming to improve community participation in local economic development activities. They became a vital part of a countywide network of various organizations.

Working Together

The Costilla County Economic Development Council membership drew heavily from Sangre de Cristo Church and local government. In a county where 85 percent of the population attends Sangre de Cristo, the church plays a vital role. Both the church and local government actively were working to clean up the

town and energize the local economy, but neither had expertise in long-range planning. Projects were started and completed as funds, labor and materials became available, but no comprehensive master plan existed. It became the mission of the San Luis Planning Commission to develop and implement a plan.

With technical assistance from CRRP, six university students came to San Luis to assist commission members. Their collective tasks included establishment of a planning studio and conducting a housing survey. Once results were available, commission members and students began to craft the master plan. At the end of the project year, the plan was nearly finished, and commission members elected to continue working on the implementation phase of the plan.

"Members also found themselves aiming to improve community participation in local economic development activities."

Planning a Future

The planning commission is putting the final touches on the master plan and will continue to meet until the plan can be implemented in the town.

In the meantime, the full economic development council continues to be extremely active in many local projects, including a local Storefront Improvement Revolving Loan Fund, an art gallery in an old renovated downtown building, and a plaza to surround the Stations of the Cross Shrine, San Luis' most visible local attraction. The San Luis Planning Commission meets the future confident that they have shaped a long agenda of meaningful local improvements for San Luis, Colorado's oldest community.

Cast of Characters

The Silverton Great Western Rocky Mountain Improvement Committee (also known as the Kellogg Group) formed to participate in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). The mayor, town board and town staff members chose people they thought would like to attend CRRP leadership training. After the training, through local newspaper coverage and word of mouth, invitation to participate went out to everyone in the community. Twelve people attended leadership training and soon after, the Kellogg Group grew to 15 members. Community representation included business owners, chamber of commerce members, local government staff, elected officials and a local newspaper reporter.

Silverton	
1990 Population	716
Children, 0-4 Years	45
Youth, 5-17 Years	169
Seniors, 65+ Years	47
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-9.8%
Peak Census (Year)	2,153 (1910)
Year of Incorporation	1876
County	San Juan
Colorado Location	Southwest
1989 Per Capita Income	$13,557

Working Partners

Silverton town government provided valuable support to the Kellogg Group: it sanctioned the group, the mayor and town board members served on the committee, and town staff devoted time and resources to the committee. Even so, the Kellogg Group operated independently of government, developing its own goals and projects. The group maintained a casual structure with no formal subcommittees; all projects were taken on by the entire group. The committee stayed together officially for 18 months, and then some members continued to work on projects that became spin-offs of the Kellogg Group. As the town clerk stated, "Projects that grew out of Kellogg now consume all the people in the group. All the projects took on lives of their own."

Kellogg Group members stimulated local goal-setting and provided fodder for many projects. Several projects continue to benefit from their energy and leadership. Some members now are involved in Colorado Initiatives, a financial assistance program of technical and implementation support for local development projects. And, with recent mine closures, Kellogg Group members see the possibility of joining forces to help the community meet potential economic challenges.

Scripting a Plot

Broad-based community development was the overall goal of the Kellogg Group. Members feel economic development is impossible until diverse interest groups within the community start working together. Because the tourist-supported portion of Silverton's economy is seasonal, businesses are divided along permanent/seasonal lines. They seldom show unified effort to build the overall economic well-being of the community. The Kellogg Group hoped to serve as a unifying agent within the community, and to encourage business operators and citizens to develop and

promote a positive image of Silverton.

Spotlight on Action

The projects taken on by the Kellogg Group all reflect its concern for basic community development. The group started by sponsoring a community clean-up. They acquired equipment and labor donations from a mining company, a local contractor and the town. Many community volunteers participated in the clean-up.

To keep momentum going, the group sponsored a community picnic to serve two purposes: celebrate the town clean-up and welcome summer business people and residents to town.

The group also sponsored Silverton Slide Show Night. They invited people to town hall, served popcorn and presented the slide show that was developed as part of CRRP leadership training, along with other rare slides furnished through private collections.

The largest project the Kellogg Group tackled was to determine the feasibility of re-opening and operating a small ski area on Kendall Mountain, next to Silverton. The group used technical assistance from CRRP to conduct a feasibility study, develop a business plan and obtain cost estimates. The existing ski area is on county owned property. In the past, it operated with the use of old mining equipment.

Plans for the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area include a new warming hut, an ice skating rink, an inner-tubing hill and a cross-country skiing trailhead. The recreation area will not compete with existing large ski areas, but will cater to families who want a low-cost outdoor experience.

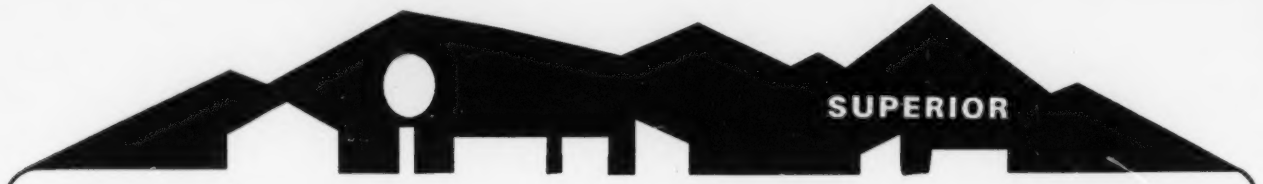
At the group's request, the town has budgeted some money for the project. Adding its own savings, the group also hopes to obtain financing through State Energy Impact funds. They plan to open a year-round facility by winter of 1992.

Another project initiated by two members of the Kellogg Group is A Theatre Group, a non-profit corporation formed to secure a facility and produce year-round theater. Working with the Grand Junction Office of Community Services, they developed a business plan, conducted an audience survey, and produced 14 plays in 1990-1991. A Theatre Group operates through grants from the Colorado Council of Arts and Humanities and the Ballantine Foundation. They also hope to raise funds to restore the historic building where they present their plays.

A Theatre Group members feel that developing the group is a project that will bring people together in Silverton, because theater bridges the interests of year-round and summer residents alike.

In the Wings

After involvement with Colorado Initiatives, which provided the Kellogg Group with technical assistance to do historic building facade studies and have town entrance improvement designs drawn, group members feel that an improvement committee will re-form. It will serve as a nucleus to process ideas and take on projects. Mine lay-offs and the possibility of limited-stakes gambling in town are potential challenges the group may help Silverton overcome.



New from Old

The Superior Community Involvement Program (SCIP), a town board committee comprised mostly of elected officials and staff, was active before the Superior town manager learned about the possibility of receiving assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). SCIP was chosen to participate in CRRP and extended an open invitation to the community. A persistent group of 10-12 members met monthly for a year. The group was comprised of town board, staff and planning commission representatives, a student, a retired college professor, a commercial photographer, a firefighter, a retiree, a carpenter and other professionals.

Superior	
1990 Population	255
Children, 0-4 Years	22
Youth, 5-17 Years	49
Seniors, 65+ Years	20
% Pop. Change 1980-90	22.6%
Peak Census (Year)	349 (1910)
Year of Incorporation	1904
County	Boulder
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$20,203

Rallying Around Water

Prior to involvement with CRRP, SCIP members worked to promote economic development in Superior. Their major effort focused on an upscale housing sub-division called Rock Creek being developed near Superior. Developers have permits to build 150 houses ranging from $100,000 to $695,000. In exchange for annexing the area in which developers were interested, Superior gained a badly-needed water supply and a new building for the town hall.

Superior residents previously relied on private wells. With a new water supply, but no infrastructure or plumbing to deliver the water to residents, fund-raising became SCIP's major focus. At this stage, Superior joined CRRP.

CRRP involvement provided the group with additional information and contacts to secure funding for a water-delivery system. And community and leadership development principles learned through CRRP encouraged citizen involvement in decisions related to the growth and change Superior is experiencing.

Mapping Strategy

SCIP's top priority became securing funds to install water-delivery infrastructure and to pay tap fees for residents who could not afford them. Superior's tax base is not large enough to allow the town to issue bonds for infrastructure development.

Along with funding, committee members had additional community development related goals. They wanted to improve local communication, maintain community identity in the face of growth, and reconcile differences between people who were anti-growth and those who saw growth as inevitable. To satisfy both groups, the committee hoped to keep Rock Creek developers responsive to community needs, and to foster a "win-win" relationship.

A Year of Action

To fund the community's water delivery system, the town received a Community Development Block Grant and loan. The town's sales tax will pay back the loan.

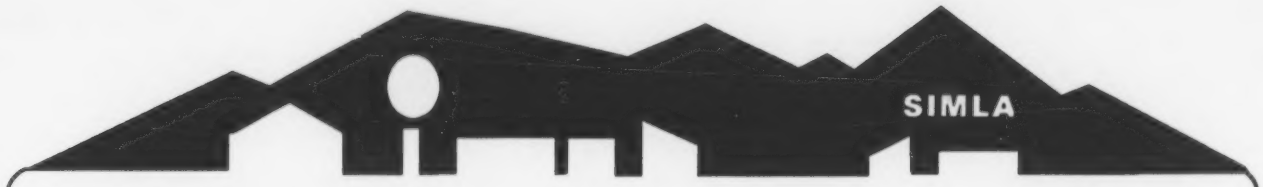
To gather specific information and community demographics, SCIP sponsored a household survey using technical assistance from CRRP. Armed with information from the survey, SCIP members published a household directory that includes names, addresses and household and home-business phone numbers. It also includes an inventory of local people's skills, town government and staff directory, and a story about Superior's history. Superior's town clerk said the directory is the "most-used package of information in town."

To improve local communications and foster good relations, SCIP developed a monthly town newsletter and sponsored town picnics. Rock Creek developers also sponsored a picnic in an effort to reach out to the community they will so greatly impact.

Staying on Course

Further economic and community development efforts will be tackled by the Superior town government and staff. A big challenge for local government and Superior citizens is to maintain a semblance of the "old town" in the midst of large-scale development.

"Along with funding, committee members...wanted to improve local communication, maintain community identity in the face of growth, and reconcile differences between people who were anti-growth and those who saw growth as inevitable."



"The town board, looking to extend its landfill's lifespan, encouraged the committee to research recycling."

Simla	
1990 Population	481
Children, 0-4 Years	43
Youth, 5-17 Years	103
Seniors, 65+ Years	109
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-2.6%
Peak Census (Year)	494 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1913
County	Elbert
Colorado Location	Southeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$16,390

Early Recruiting

While researching another rural assistance program, the Simla Town Board learned about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Two local groups wanted to become involved with the project--the Simla Teen Action Center and the town library staff. The local newspaper published an invitation for participation. The target area followed school district lines, which actually included several small communities. Participation on the Simla Rural Revitalization Committee originally included business owners, youth, seniors, town board members and various community groups. Initially, the group attracted 30 people, and has stabilized as a core group of 8-10.

Building a Team

The Simla Rural Revitalization Committee began to meet and function on a very informal basis, with future meetings set each time to accommodate members' schedules. Later, the group established a regular meeting schedule and selected a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. Committees organized around specific projects, and the whole group completed some improvement projects together.

A strong investment in local youth--one of the driving forces behind the group--also has proven to be somewhat of an obstacle for the group. People in the community spend so much time and energy on youth activities and sports that they have difficulty finding time to support the revitalization committee. Time constraints have presented a challenge to the group, causing some members to question the future of their organization.

The Game Plan

A citizen opinion survey was conducted a year or two prior to CRRP. The committee based its goals on those results, as expressed by the group's mission statement: "To enhance the quality of life in the Simla area by fostering leadership skills through team-building, in order to assist in determining and achieving community goals." The group's specific goals have included economic development by encouraging local entrepreneurship, researching prospects for a local recycling program and a community/recreation center.

Project: Recycle

The town board, looking to extend its

landfill's lifespan, encouraged the committee to research recycling. Initially, committee members believed it would only be a research project. But after putting so much time and energy into the research process, they discovered that a local junk dealer was available as a sub-contractor for the operation. It only made sense to them to implement a program. The group secured a land donation from a local excavating company and erected a 4' by 15' frame structure with simulated cedar siding. The revitalization committee authorized funds for this project, and a local lumber company donated the siding. The structure has five compartments for glass, aluminum, plastic, newspaper and other metals.

Since the recycling center opened, a local liquor store established a second site for aluminum. Proceeds from this store's location go to the Christmas Lights Fund in Simla.

A school program further involves the people of Simla in the recycling effort. Participating students approach neighbors with pledge cards, asking them to commit to recycling. Information and instructions about recycling and Simla's center appear on the pledge cards. Class parties reward students for their efforts.

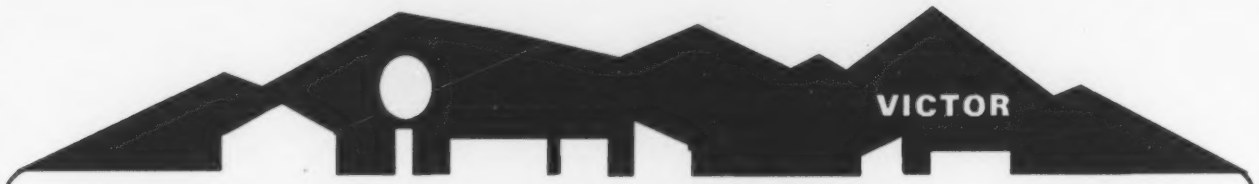
The group now has set its focus on a community center. They hope to develop a center that will serve as a combination teen/ senior/recreation center and library. With technical assistance provided through CRRP, an architecture student is helping them with preliminary design options and cost estimates. Others with CRRP are helping with an informal feasibility study for the community center.

Other projects include completion of two community welcome signs, a promotional slide show and a grant workshop jointly sponsored with nearby Calhan.

Running the Ball

Because team membership continues to decline, the team questioned its future viability. But remaining members are committed and will continue their efforts, believing that the town needs the group's efforts to accomplish projects. As the site manager for the group stated, "This group will continue to get things accomplished by individuals who have the time to take the ball and run with it."

"A school program further involves the people of Simla in the recycling effort. Participating students approach neighbors with pledge cards, asking them to commit to recycling."



"The recent introduction of limited-stakes gambling in nearby Cripple Creek forced the committee to change some of its goals and also its sub-committees' organization."

Victor	
1990 Population	258
Children, 0-4 Years	15
Youth, 5-17 Years	56
Seniors, 65+ Years	33
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-2.6%
Peak Census (Year)	4,986 (1900)
Year of Incorporation	1894
County	Teller
Colorado Location	Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$14,003

An Enthusiastic Crew

The city council urged Victor residents to become involved with the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). Calling themselves the Victor Colorado Revitalization Committee, the group has grown from 30 members to more than 50, with a core coordinating group of about eight. The secret of their growth has been representation from many organizations and interests in Victor. These include city council, chamber of commerce, Victor Historic Preservation, tourism, housing, parks and recreation, ranching, mining, support services and people from the surrounding area. Each organization's enthusiasm has grown, leading to increased involvement with the committee.

Teamwork

Victor's committee originally divided into sub-committees surrounding the projects and issues identified in their community assessment process. Project ideas included a town opinion survey, historic preservation, parks and recreation, housing, economic development, zoning, and centennial planning. One sub-committee studied the feasibility of converting the Columbine Tunnel into a tourist attraction. The recent introduction of limited-stakes gambling in nearby Cripple Creek forced the committee to change some of its goals and also its sub-committees' organization.

Some members of the Victor committee recognized the need for a central committee within the community to coordinate efforts among other existing groups. Currently, efforts by individual groups overlap and do not present a unified community effort for outside fundraising. The group wants to address these shortcomings by learning about other community organizations' needs through various CRRP projects. The committee then could become a community council to serve, represent and coordinate activities of many groups.

Another evolving feature of this group has been to enhance its members' leadership skills. They then go on to be elected or appointed to local commissions, boards and councils.

Outlining a Plan

Primarily, the Victor Colorado Revitalization Committee operated to establish a

balance between citizens' rugged individualism and the need to unite the community for fundraising and improvement efforts. Committee members extended this goal to various organizations in town that previously had not worked together toward community improvement. Although these goals remain, a sense of urgency has caused the group to re-prioritize and step up its pace.

In October 1991, the neighboring town of Cripple Creek began legalized limited-stakes gambling operations, bringing an onslaught of new residents and visitors to the area. With a majority of Victor citizens resisting growth until now, the Victor team recognizes the need to play a role in the transition from no growth to the inevitable growth that will occur. The team hopes to assist town administration to direct policy toward slow, controlled growth, and minimal impact on the character of the quaint, historic mining town. Several issues now lie at the forefront of thoughts and action for group members. Maintaining control over growth, traffic and parking, preserving Victor's historic buildings and heritage, and keeping land and housing affordable are all issues that have taken much of the group's focus. The committee also hopes to develop a land trust to ensure affordable housing and raise capital to help with historic preservation efforts.

Vision and Action

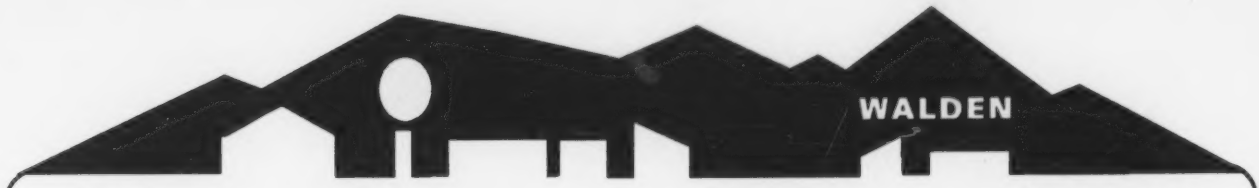
The first task the committee completed was development of a vision statement. The group is impressed with the great amount of local consensus that fostered its development. The group's statement reads: "Victor wants to create a thriving year-round, cohesive, residential community, maintaining our small town atmosphere, with collaborative, diversified economy; providing the essential necessary services; preserving our mining industry; promoting our heritage through tourism, and providing appealing and accommodating recreational facilities and programs for all."

Next, the Victor committee conducted a household survey and distributed the results to local post office boxholders and organizations.

From survey results, the committee chose three priority projects: sewer sludge disposal, street drainage, and town beautification, including signage and streetscape. (The Columbine Tunnel feasibility study led to the conclusion that transfer of ownership and related liability concerns render the plan unworkable for now.) Using technical assistance provided through CRRP, the committee is having a landscape architect design town signs and a streetscape plan for main street, including drainage improvements. The group also is supporting the city's efforts by working with a local mining company to have sewer sludge recycled as organic material to encourage revegetation on nearby mine tailings.

On the Horizon

While Victor Colorado Revitalization Committee members pursue physical improvement projects for their community, they also are paving the way for future revitalization efforts. Sub-committee members developed a formal proposal to incorporate as a community non-profit organization. As a non-profit organization, they plan to develop funding packages of grants and low-interest loans for community-based projects and to generate other projects, particularly for low-income citizens and underfunded local employment enterprises. And, they will continue to explore the possibility of establishing a land trust to preserve affordable community housing.



Two Morale Boosters

Involvement in the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) came along at a good time for the community of Walden and those already involved in economic development efforts. The community had begun to pull together to support two events: being selected to provide the White House Christmas Tree, and celebrating Walden's centennial. These events boosted morale and began lifting the community out of a slump induced by mining layoffs. That positive energy carried over into their involvement with CRRP and helped the team and community's successful revitalization efforts.

Walden	
1990 Population	890
Children, 0-4 Years	74
Youth, 5-17 Years	169
Seniors, 65+ Years	96
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-6.0%
Peak Census (Year)	947 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1890
County	Jackson
Colorado Location	North Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$15,492

Come One, Come All

The North Park Revitalization Committee began with 10 members. The committee has remained fairly consistent, with some turnover among active members. Four members have stayed with the committee since its beginning, forming the core of the group. The committee at various times has included town board members, town staff, Jackson County Commissioners, business people, homemakers, ranchers, and county administrators. The group meets once a month and forms subcommittees for separate projects.

Members of the revitalization committee stress the importance of constantly encouraging people to become involved with their efforts. The group even welcomed naysayers. Getting them involved in a project soon turned pessimism into positive support.

The town administered revitalization project funds. Town staff provided administrative assistance for the committee by recording the meetings, mailing and publicizing committee functions. Although the town's assistance was vital to the committee, members emphasize the broader nature of the group. As one member expressed, "We are a community...there is very little distinction between city and county. We try to develop a sense of community countywide." Group members function as liaison between elected officials and citizens.

Taking Aim

The committee assessed the various resources for revitalizing the local economy. Identifying steps in this process, the committee established more specific goals: to develop materials and methods for promoting the area; to identify and develop the area's potential for natural resource-based industry and tourism; to expand medical services for present residents and to attract new residents; to enhance more people's leadership abilities so they could help plan and implement revitalization activities; and to beautify and clean up the town.

Friends + Funds = Action

First, the group developed a videotape based on a slide show put together for CRRP. The committee revised the tape and ended up with two professionally produced videos used to successfully recruit a doctor. The Physician Recruitment Committee was a subcommittee of the revitalization committee. Members studied and adapted other rural communities' professional-recruitment approaches.

A Forest Diversification Grant financed videos produced by the revitalization committee. Along with technical assistance from CRRP, these funds also financed production of a brochure, a town signage package, a town marketing plan, and plans for Lions Park.

For three consecutive years the committee sponsored a successful town clean-up day and free day at the dump. The committee will make this an annual event.

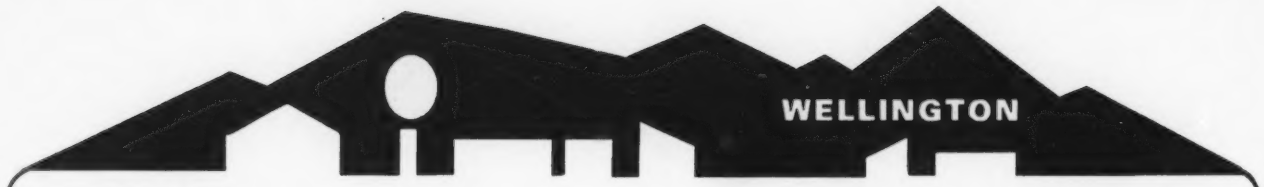
The revitalization committee is also in the midst of two large-scale projects, both of which may take a few years to complete. In 1988, the Walden Lions Club approached the group requesting assistance to develop Lions Park in Walden. The park eventually will include a kiosk and a wetlands trail system. The county has donated lots for the park and Lions Club members are attempting to get the rest of the land for the proposed park donated. The city and county applied jointly for an Energy Impact Assistance Grant to pay for the park kiosk, which will be the cornerstone of the park. Building began on the kiosk with a barn-raising event in the summer of 1990. Community volunteers donated many hours of labor to the project. Revitalization committee members believe much of the committee's success can be attributed to the citizens who have been so generous with their time and talents, stretching grant money further.

The committee also is playing a key role in organizing a regional visitors' environmental education center. A public/private-sector partnership has formed to construct, operate and maintain the center. It represents four federal and four state agencies, the local utility company, banking, mining, forestry and agricultural products industries, the chamber of commerce and the North Park Revitalization Committee. A November 1991 ceremony cemented the partnership through the signing of a formal memorandum of understanding among all parties that will cooperate in the center.

Branching Out

North Park Revitalization Committee members believe their group will continue to serve local government and residents indefinitely. They plan to build on Walden's renown and expand that to a broader North Park regional identity.

"We are a community...there is very little distinction between city and county. We try to develop a sense of community countywide."



" In our community, CRRP pulled together a group of people willing to spend time and energy to do something creative for the betterment of the town."

Wellington	
1990 Population	1,340
Children, 0-4 Years	128
Youth, 5-17 Years	366
Seniors, 65+ Years	99
% Pop. Change 1980-90	10.3%
Peak Census (Year)	1,340 (1990)
Year of Incorporation	1905
County	Larimer
Colorado Location	North Central
1989 Per Capita Income	$15,925

Drawing a Crowd

The Wellington Town Board applied for assistance through the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP). With significant town board representation and involvement, the Community Awareness Participation Program began to focus on economic development. Twelve people attended CRRP leadership training and, initially, as many as 75 people attended monthly meetings.

Finding the Way

During the year with CRRP, the group sought to establish a common direction. Project accomplishment during this year was limited, and some members lost interest. Now nearing the end of their third year, the group believes it has discovered its niche, and with a core group of six, enjoys great success. Although they would like broader community participation, members have found that their small size and complementary skills and interests make decision-making relatively easy.

The town board still is represented on CAPP, but members consider their group independent of local government. CAPP now functions in a capacity that the town board cannot. As one member stated, "In small towns like ours, town government only performs the nuts and bolts functions that keep the town going. In our community, CRRP pulled together a group of people willing to spend time and energy to do something creative for the betterment of the town."

Setting Goals

Initially, the CAPP's primary goals were to improve Wellington's image and to overcome local lethargy. While tackling these problems, the group hoped to spearhead economic development efforts in Wellington. Setting their sights on creating local jobs, they encouraged people to develop a cottage industry. When that idea faltered, they decided to address the town's appearance. Committee members re-directed their energy toward town clean-up and beautification.

Digging In

At first, CAPP tried to encourage some local senior citizens to develop a quilting cottage industry. Finding little community enthusiasm for this project, the committee

turned its attention to developing an agriculture museum. They visited a similar facility in Fort Collins, contacted Burlington Northern Railroad for information on Wellington's history and then put together a display depicting their town's history. CAPP members hoped to spark community interest in local history, and thus, in the museum. Again, they met with little enthusiasm.

Turning their attention to town clean-up, the group then sponsored "Trash Busters." For three consecutive years, this massive town clean-up effort has met with great success. In conjunction with free dump days in Larimer County, CAPP members and community volunteers picked up and hauled trash, including appliances and tires, at individual homes. They arranged donations of dump trucks, loaders and trash containers from companies in Fort Collins and Denver. The first year, 12 committee members organized and implemented the event. This year, 75 volunteers, including some from the Denver Rescue Mission Farm--located one mile outside Wellington--collected 64 semi-truckloads of trash.

After the first "Trash Busters" experience, CAPP continued to address Wellington's appearance, using technical assistance provided by CRRP to have a pedestrian walkway designed. Initially, fund-raising for the project proved difficult; the group sent out 86 funding proposals and received 85 negative responses. One local business donated $500. Group members then applied for Energy Impact Assistance funding through the state and received $50,000. They continued to solicit funds and put together a package of $64,500 of town lottery money, town economic development money, town tree board money, county commission funds, U.S. Forest Service money and local business donations. The town also strongly supported the project with personnel and equipment. The pedestrian walkway will run along four blocks of Wellington's main street and will link the town's newly renovated park to Box Elder Creek on the south end of town.

Next, CAPP will develop a bikepath/ greenbelt along Box Elder Creek, connected to the pedestrian walkway. Plans have been drawn; the next step is to secure right-of-way.

In the Distance

The small, independent and stable group continues to function as a creative, innovative energy source for the community. They have learned how to engage the necessary people, groups, funds and material resources to complete projects. As long as projects require, CAPP will remain active.

"To improve countywide communication and promote the area to visitors, the group developed a promotional newsletter and a brochure called "Encounter Yuma County."

Yuma County	
1990 Population	8,954
Children, 0-4 Years	592
Youth, 5-17 Years	1,998
Seniors, 65+ Years	1,505
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-7.5%
Peak Census (Year)	13,897 (1920)
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$19,698

Creating an Alliance

The Yuma County economic development director learned about the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) and recommended that Wray and Yuma, located 25 miles apart, apply jointly for participation in the program. Once Yuma and Wray were accepted into the program, approximately 33 people from both towns participated in the Yuma County Kellogg Rural Revitalization Committee. Representatives included county commissioners, volunteer firefighters, emergency medical service personnel, chamber of commerce members, school district administrators, hospital administrators, museum staff and other community volunteers.

Common Ground

To succeed in economic development efforts, the two communities needed better communications and working relationships. To promote teamwork, the revitalization committee met bi-weekly and elected co-chairs from both Yuma and Wray. Neutral ground for early meetings was found in Eckley, a community located between Yuma and Wray.

Initially, the committee served as an extension of local governments. Later, committee members decided that a true countywide effort would require that the committee become more of a people's forum and action group, unencumbered by inter-governmental rivalry.

Although co-chairs were appointed from each community, they served more as community contacts for the group than as facilitators. The committee encouraged participation from all members. The group organized into sub-committees to address issues and take on local projects. Approximately seven sub-committees met monthly.

The group discovered that meeting twice a month soon over-extended already busy people. After several months, the group convened monthly. Also, by enlisting people already active in the two communities for the revitalization committee, members believe they fell short of their goal to expand the local leadership pool and involve a greater number of people in both communities.

Even so, the committee successfully pursued several important projects.

Setting Goals

The Yuma County Kellogg Rural Revitalization Committee formed to bring Yuma County's two largest towns together for community and economic development efforts. The group aimed to improve countywide communication, develop a countywide effort to promote tourism, and help create local jobs to entice young people to stay in the county or encourage them to return after completing their education.

Working Together

Revitalization committee members are impressed with the number of projects they initiated and the accomplishments they attained. To improve countywide communication and promote the area to visitors, the group developed a promotional newsletter and a brochure called "Encounter Yuma County." The newsletter features countywide activities and issues, while the brochure informs Yuma County residents and visitors of local activities. CRRP participation gave a boost to projects already underway in both Yuma and Wray. Groups involved in fund-raising to build community centers in both communities received large grants after the revitalization committee was organized, and members attribute some of their fund-raising success to involvement with CRRP. In addition, the committee also assisted nearby Eckley with the initial fund-raising and design process for a community center there.

The committee concentrated most of its efforts on developing a memorial and nature trail at historic Beecher Island, the site of one of the last frontier battles between the U.S. Army and Native Americans before the native people were moved to reservations. Technical assistance provided through CRRP included design assistance and help in determining short- and long-term project goals.

The committee also worked to develop a dinosaur trail, build a women's resource center in Yuma, assist two museum projects and encourage development of cottage industry in the county.

Planning Ahead

The revitalization committee no longer meets formally, but members feel that the group successfully encouraged economic development in Yuma County. Committee members say they have learned important community development principles through the project, and they plan to apply them on an informal basis to keep town and county revitalization efforts moving forward.

"Groups involved in fund-raising to build community centers in both communities received large grants after the revitalization committee was organized..."

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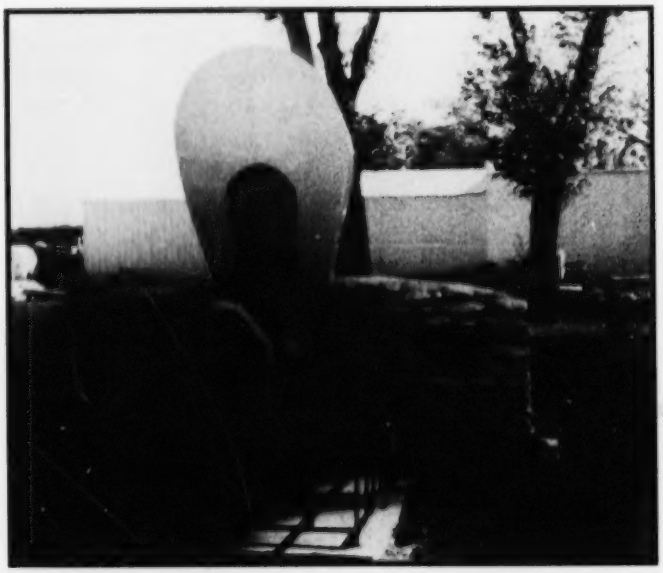

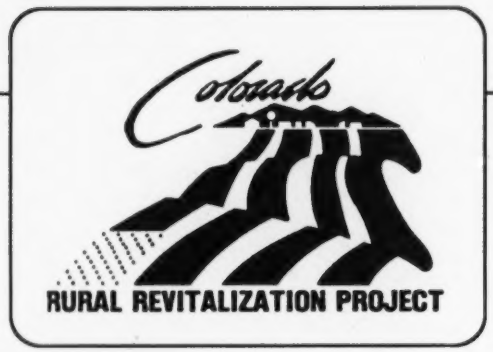

Visions in Action...
Colorado Community Cases

For:

- **rural leaders**
- **educators**
- **cooperative extension staff**
- **community development professionals**

Learn how citizens concerned about their communities' futures are translating their visions into action.

Between 1988 and 1991, forty-five communities in Colorado set out to improve their quality of life. They joined the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project, a unique community-leadership development partnership with Colorado State University, the University of Colorado at Denver, Colorado's Department of Local Affairs, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Which towns took part? Where are they located? How did the communities determine courses of action and organize their volunteer efforts? What kinds of improvements have they made? How can other small towns learn from their experiences? What will these communities do next?

Insights on these and other questions can be found in an upcoming 115-page, folio-size paperback publication. The volume features each community's story, is indexed by towns and counties, and includes demographic and economic data. An extensive reference section includes matrices of community concerns and accomplishments; and, presence of schools, health services and senior facilities. A description of the Project includes educational, consultative, and technical assistance activities, and offers summary observations on local development experiences. See the next page for a sample of the towns' stories.

For your copy of the publication, please fill out the form below.

*Visions in Action...*Colorado Community Cases

Please send me ____copy/copies of *Visions in Action*, a report of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project.

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Mail To: Center for Rural Assistance
135 Aylesworth Hall NW
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523

"Through broad participation of our citizens, Holyoke will be a community united together for Pride and Progress."

Holyoke	
1990 Population	1,931
Children, 0-4 Years	133
Youth, 5-17 Years	368
Seniors, 65+ Years	398
% Pop. Change 1980-90	-7.7%
Peak Census (Year)	2,093 (1980)
Year of Incorporation	1888
County	Phillips
Colorado Location	Northeast
1989 Per Capita Income	$17,629

Teaming Up

Holyoke became a third-year community of the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project (CRRP) through the efforts of the school district superintendent, a citizen group interested in revitalizing the local movie theater and the city council. The resulting Holyoke Revitalization group initially consisted of 35 people, representing a broad community spectrum. Ten months into the project, 20-25 individuals remained active. From the onset, Holyoke Revitalization defined its boundary to take in all of the Holyoke School District. Two-thirds of the community's families reside within town limits, one-third, in the surrounding agricultural areas.

Pulling Together

Early in the team-development process, Holyoke's group realized that their greatest community resource or asset existed in the many outstanding individuals living within the community. From the beginning of their CRRP involvement, revitalization group members were committed to making their community better. Under the guidance of CRRP core staff, the Holyoke group identified and prioritized three projects to work on, forming three task forces of approximately five people to work on each project. Initial projects were community assessment, community welcome signs, and a community bike/walking path. Later, two additional task forces formed, one to refine a vision statement for the community and a second to implement means for effective community planning, coordination and cooperation.

Setting Sights

The long-term goals for Holyoke Revitalization relate to economic development and overall community well-being. The short-term goals are to foster interest and implement action that leads to fulfilling and sustaining long-term goals.

Community assessment results show that residents have a tremendous amount of community pride, but were not working together in a unified effort for community progress. This was interesting, because Holyoke has long been known to local residents as "the community of pride and progress". Holyoke Revitalization hopes to provide the needed catalyst and energy for a safe and easy flow of communication, cooperation and coordination among various segments of the community.

This unified effort is exemplified in the vision statement the community adopted in July 1991: "Through broad participation of our citizens, Holyoke will be a community united together for Pride and Progress. A safe, healthy, pleasant and sustainable environment will be provided where each citizen can develop his or her potential. Holyoke will be a diversified and economically stable rural community committed to shaping its own future, developing leadership in people of all ages, and serving the interests, needs and values of this and future generations."

Pride and Progress

The community assessment task force organized, implemented and completed their project first. They designed a comprehensive survey that went to every household. With help from CRRP, the group analyzed and reported survey results in an 82-page document. The group shared the results with various boards and elected officials within the community. The local newspaper published the survey results in a series of three articles. The community assessment task force's positive actions also served as a model for those working on other projects.

The signage team developed four "Welcome to Holyoke" signs with cooperation from the city council and local citizens, and with technical assistance from CRRP. The signs' installation concluded with a formal unveiling ceremony and newspaper coverage commemorating their completion.

CRRP also provided additional technical assistance for design of a community bicycle/walking path. The path project grew into a multi-year undertaking. Currently, the path task force is reorganizing to tackle this project in several smaller steps over time.

Holyoke Revitalization put a lot of time and energy into developing a community vision statement. Members wanted it to be meaningful, something that the entire community would agree with and take ownership in, and that would guide revitalization efforts. Vision task force members shared the vision statement process with many boards and organizations within the community to gain local support.

The community celebrated completion of the vision statement in several ways. The group launched a "Catch the Vision" campaign. July became "Vision Month," which culminated in a booth at the county fair, where people were encouraged to discuss the vision statement and to participate in revitalizing the community. Finally, a large pen-scrolled parchment paper copy of the vision statement was signed by community members and presented to the mayor in a special ceremony celebrating the Holyoke community's acceptance of the vision statement.

The task force on effective means to bring together the various leaders in the community developed a day-long workshop entitled Vision 2000. The workshop focused on discussing the community's future, setting common goals, and coordinating efforts within the community for its well-being. This task force continues to work on ways to encourage communication, cooperation and coordination among various segments of the community.

A Look Ahead

Holyoke Revitalization continues to take on projects of its own, and encourage other community organizations and leaders to participate in a coordinated revitalization effort. To establish a more permanent and official purpose, the group may seek to incorporate. Most importantly, Holyoke Revitalization hopes to be the driving force behind Holyoke's Pride and Progress for years to come.

Colorado State University

University of Colorado at Denver

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